

SOME ROYALTIES  
AND A PRIME MINISTER









*Photograph by Underwood and Underwood*

THE PRINCE OF WALES

*Portraits from Life*

By

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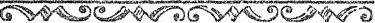


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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN . . .	1
II. A FIRST IMPRESSION OF EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES	70
III. THE NEMESSES: EMPRESS MARIA-FEODOROWNA AND HER TWO SISTERS .	85
IV. OUR VISIT TO THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES	105
V. SOPHIE, THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA .	134
VI. THE SHADOW EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS	154
VII. WHEN MICHAEL OF RUMANIA, AGED FIVE, BECAME A KING . . . . .	181
VIII. A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN: HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH, PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND . . . . .	193



# ILLUSTRATIONS

THE PRINCE OF WALES . . . . .	FRONTISPIECE
	ENDING PAGE
KING ALFONSO OF SPAIN, AGED NINE . . . . .	20
KING ALFONSO OF SPAIN, 1929 . . . . .	20
THE THREE PRINCESSES OF DENMARK WITH THEIR MOTHER, QUEEN LOUISE . . . . .	90
KING FERDINAND OF BULGARIA . . . . .	116
PRINCESS SOPHIE OF WIED . . . . .	140
THE GRAND DUCHESS VICTORIA . . . . .	162
THE GRAND DUKE CYRIL . . . . .	162
KING MICHAEL OF RUMANIA, 1929 . . . . .	184
A FAMILY GROUP AT THE WHARF . . . . .	200





## CHAPTER I

### DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

#### THE KING OF THE CHILDREN

**I**T was in my sixth year that I first knew Don Alfonso, King of Spain, in the realm of fancy; and it was in this fantastic world, remote from reality, in which children dwell, that I first approached him. My happy ignorance at that time was my first and best source of information, and I believe it gave me a keener insight into his character than any biographer could have done.

In those early days it would have been quite impossible for me to say where my country began and where it ended on the map of Europe and what was the place occupied by the countries of those other children—English, French, Russian or Spanish—with whom my sister and I played and paddled all day long on the warm golden sands at Biarritz. But there is one frontier which all the children of the world know well. It is the frontier which separates their country from the land of the grown-ups. The child who ventures to pass it is caught in a trap, he will never come back to the ideal boundary line of childhood. He is enlisted in the

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

army of the enemy, that of the grown-ups, entirely recruited from the deserters from the other camp, that of the children. For little boys and girls who have not yet begun to learn history or geography, and who know nothing about the quarrels of their ancestors, there is only one national honor, only one continent, only one flag—that of childhood. All the rest is foreign land. In the entrenched camp of the children in which I lived between the ages of six and twelve, on the shores of Biarritz, in sight of the Pyrenees, the news had reached me—I can't exactly say how or when, as if brought by the wind, by the sea-birds, or by those dark little girls, our playmates, who were called Pepita, Conchita, Carmen and Isabellita—that on the other side of the Bay of Biscay, not very far from Biarritz, there where the mountains fade into blue, a child of our age ruled. His name was Don Alfonso, King of Spain. Just about this time it happened that my sister and I had much to suffer from the unjust laws of grown-ups. A French nurse, called Marie Perron, had caused us to be severely punished for a crime we had not intentionally committed. She complained to our mother that on our way to the beach with her we had deliberately walked in muddy water in order to splash and ruin her new gray alpaca dress. Unable to prove our innocence, we had been severely punished. For three days the beach was forbidden to us. We

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

were not to meet our friends. Thus the punishment was made public. Our despair and humiliation knew no bounds. I trace the origin of our early partisanship of King Alfonso to this feeling of undue condemnation which is to be found underlying the foundation of so many parties, and is the hidden cause of revolutions, old and new.

How did the idea arise in our minds that under the government of a child the iniquity of the grown-ups would be checked and the rights of children upheld? It was Isabellita who told us that on the other side of the Pyrenees children ceased to be misunderstood and unjustly punished, and everybody was happy. How well I remember Isabellita! Her proud little face, her curly black hair, her fiery speech! She made us all think as she did. Her king, if he were our king, would deliver us from all unjust punishment. Other kings and queens, she said, were old men and women: King Charles of Rumania, Queen Victoria of England, King Humbert of Italy, and so on. What could *they* know about children? Her king, Don Alfonso, was more of a king than any of them, she said. By special grace of God he had been born a king, and, she had been told, in some mysterious way, he had been a king even *before* he was born. Was all she said about Don Alfonso true? Was it possible that a child could exert supreme power? One day Isabellita brought as evidence to the beach,

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

wrapped in a piece of gilt paper, a silver coin, quite new, bearing the image of Alfonso XIII. We all gathered round to look at his little profile, his pouting mouth and fluffy hair. Here indeed was a little boy of our own age. We could not doubt it. Isabellita pointed out, hanging on his thin neck, what we called "a little sheep," the Golden Fleece. On the reverse of the coin she showed us the magnificent arms of Spain: the towers of Castile, the stripes of Aragon, the *fleur-de-lis* of France. In an outburst of lyrical enthusiasm she made us all swear fealty to this little boy who was to establish justice for children on earth. From that day the idea grew in our minds that on the other side of those mountains, which seemed so near when the weather was bright, the children's kingdom was hidden. We imagined a country where the grown-ups were sent to bed early, where the children alone had the right to stay up as long as they liked, where every day was a birthday, where one party followed another, one game another. In short, it was a kingdom specially made for us, governed in accordance with our tastes, and, above all, with our sense of justice. Under Isabellita's direction a league was formed to uphold Don Alfonso's rights of universal monarchy. We were all to go to San Sebastian, the neighboring seaside resort where he lived, swear allegiance to the little king, and obtain his protection in exchange. He would show us how to fight our

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

oppressor, our hereditary enemy, the grown-up. All children possess the mentality of the besieged. Every time we considered we had been unjustly punished, or compelled to do what we did not want to do, we imagined that some day help would come to us from beyond the mountains. I daresay poor Isabellita, who had started the movement, was an excitable, oversensitive child. Not long after that her parents took her to Paris and placed her in a convent school. She did not live long. We heard she had died of meningitis only one year later, at the age of nine.

Not long ago when one of my friends, André Maurois, the writer, told me that his children, although brought up in a republican country, took an astounding interest in little King Michael of Rumania, aged six, I was less astonished than he was at this sudden fit of loyalty which seemed so extraordinary to their father. I told him of our childish worship of Don Alfonso. In this world, where everything changes from one generation to another, children alone remain the same. They are faithful to their secret religion, that of the weak, forever incomprehensible to the strong.

One warm Thursday afternoon, during the Easter holidays, we were told, my sister Jeanne and I, that we would receive the visit of a little boy from Spain, the son of an old friend of our parents,

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

the Marquis of Alcedo. So, to our afternoon tea, which we took in the garden at that season under the shade of a beautiful old magnolia tree, was added on that particular day a big chocolate cake, and my mother, in honor of our guest, brought us a huge box of preserved fruit, an annual gift from our Uncle George, who lived in Nice. The big box, adorned with pink ribbons and a bouquet of artificial violets, was set in the middle of the table, where it had a gorgeous effect. These preparations gave us a great idea of the importance our mother attached to the visit of the little Spanish boy. Still, for us the advent of the young visitor coming straight from the country of our dreams where a child was all-powerful was a much greater event than any of the grown-ups could imagine. Jeanne and I even went so far as to convince ourselves that he was coming to us as ambassador from our sovereign, Alfonso XIII. We had heard that the boy's father had been an ambassador, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world to us that a king nine years old should have a plenipotentiary of his own age or nearly so. On questioning our mother, we learned that the little boy was ten years old. This made him three years older than I was and two years younger than my sister. Our curiosity was roused to fever pitch, and we had already formulated the questions we intended to put to our new friend. What game should we play first after tea? Blind-

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

man's buff? But we were not numerous enough for that. Tennis I was just learning and played too badly, my sister said—anyhow there were only three of us. Croquet, perhaps? As we were still discussing this weighty point, the unknown made his appearance at the end of the path, walking between my mother and aunt. As they made their way in our direction, he bowed repeatedly first to one and then to the other, talking all the time with the greatest animation. He was in mourning, having recently lost his mother, as we had been told. He wore dazzling white sandals laced in the fashion affected by the smart young dandies of Biarritz, in his buttonhole a carnation, under his arm his straw hat with a black band, bare-headed, his glossy dark hair brushed back in manly fashion. He looked to us exceedingly smart, and his manners seemed different from those of the little boys we had known up to then. It was true we had never met a Spanish boy—only girls. When our mother and aunt reached us and said they would leave him with his new little friends, he bid good-by to the two ladies by clicking his heels together, kissing their hands, and making a grand salute. My mother and aunt seemed to look favorably on such politeness and good manners. As soon as they were out of sight, the stranger turned towards us and asked our names with sudden assurance.

“Jeanne,” said my sister.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

"Marthe," said I.

"Oh," said he, "and I . . . Fernando Alvaro Jago Gonsalve y Castrillo y Alcedo y Santilliana, Marquis of Valadérès, thrice grandee of Spain."

We burst out laughing. It was just as we had thought: with so many names and so much grandeur he must certainly be an ambassador! Without taking any notice of our gayety, he sat down, stretched out his hand, pushed aside the lace paper that covered the box of fruit, put a whole apricot in his mouth, and with his elbow on the table, said condescendingly:

"You may call me Fernandito."

After this preliminary attack on the box, he began eating with extraordinary appetite. One slice of cake after another, one candied fruit after another, disappeared into his wide mouth, displaying his beautiful white teeth in the process. While he ate, he talked, laughed, and did everything we had been taught not to do: elbows on the table, taking things without waiting for them to be offered, talking with his mouth full. He told us with great volubility that he had come straight from San Sebastian. The king was there. He had been received the day before yesterday by His Majesty: "One had played games." Dazzled, in ecstasy, we both listened. But really, Fernandito was eating too much even for an ambassador, even for a little boy who said he was thrice a grandee of



## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

Spain. After his third cup of chocolate, seeing that the level of the candied fruit in the box was getting dangerously low, my sister got up and suggested we should now go and play.

"I haven't finished yet," declared the ambassador, his mouth full.

We began to feel somewhat anxious. Would Fernandito not be seriously ill if he continued? Or, in that children's realm from which he came, where the laws of grown-ups had no longer any effect, did candied fruit, even swallowed in enormous quantities, not make you ill? The big box, from which we were never allowed to take more than one fruit at a time after each meal, was nearly empty, and as the sea recedes at low tide, leaving a bed of seaweed behind, we could now see revealed at the bottom of the box a layer of pink paper shavings and very little else. Fernandito rose from the table with a noble and satisfied air.

"Now," said he, "let's play. You will seek," he said to my sister Jeanne, "and," (turning to me) "you will hide with me."

Subdued, giddy with admiration, neither of us dared raise a protest. His tone of command even impressed my big sister. As for me, I was both admiring and frightened. A magnolia tree was chosen by Fernandito as the den. Jeanne was to count up to three hundred. He bound a handkerchief over her eyes, spun her round several times

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

like a top, then took my hand, and off we ran on tiptoe toward the farther end of the park in the direction of the kitchen garden. When we had reached an old dilapidated gardener's cottage, which was now used as a tool shed, Fernandito asked:

"Is there a loft?"

I answered: "Yes, but we are forbidden to go there as the flooring is rotten."

"Let's go in," said Fernandito, boldly.

"How daring he is," thought I to myself, and followed him tremblingly because I hated spiders, and in order to keep us away from the loft, our nurses had always told us that the cottage was full of them.

Climbing a decrepit old ladder, we reached the door of the loft. It was big and dark in there, and the air was stifling. The buzzing of flies and wasps could be heard. A small broken skylight was filled with spiders' webs swaying in the wind, and by its dim light we could see how rotten the planks were. My companion pointed out a beam which seemed to be less rotten than the others, and said to me: "Sit down there." I obeyed. Fernandito crawled like a cat along the beams inside the roof and raising himself to the level of the skylight, called "Cuckoo!" three times in a raucous voice.

It was the signal agreed on. The game began. Fernandito returned by the same perilous path

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

and crouched beside me on his heels, as silent as a red Indian. We held our breath. After what seemed to me an eternity, perhaps a quarter of an hour, my sister's steps could be heard on the gravel below. In the half light Fernandito's eyes glittered. My sister entered the house, we heard her prowling around, but the idea of climbing the ladder never occurred to her, and at last she went. As soon as the noise of her footsteps had died away, Fernandito burst out laughing.

"Naturally," said I, "she cannot find us here because it is forbidden."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing is forbidden," said he.

This lofty assertion seemed to me really worthy of the ambassador of the King of the Children.

"It's true he comes from the country where everything is allowed," thought I, "but as poor Jeanne doesn't quite belong to it yet, perhaps we should call once more; otherwise she will never have a fair chance of finding us." When I thought she was far enough off, I said to Fernandito:

"Let's shout again."

"No," said Fernandito in a stifled voice. "Listen. I hear her again; she is coming back."

In fact, as Jeanne was unable to find us, she had retraced her steps and was now rummaging in the tool shed, which was directly under the loft.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

"We must shout so that she can find us; it isn't fair," said I.

No sooner had I said these words in a low voice than I saw Fernandito's face close to mine, flaming with rage. He was brandishing a small knife which he had taken out of his pocket.

"If you shout," said he, "you can look out, for I shall cut open a vein," and he placed the blade of the penknife on his bare wrist, ready to put an end to his existence.

I was terrified.

"Fernandito, don't do that!"

I tried to snatch the knife from his hand and fell on my knees. At the same moment an awful crack was heard and the floor began opening under me. I could never quite understand how Fernandito, letting his knife drop and taking hold of a beam, as agile as a monkey, had sufficient strength to drag me back from the hole into which I had already begun to slip. My dress was torn; my heart was beating wildly. We all three went home, so thoroughly frightened and subdued that we were quite silent.

On our way back my sister helped to brush the traces of our visit to the loft from Fernandito's clothes. As for my dress, it was ruined, and I could foresee a good scolding when our naughtiness should be discovered. When we went into the house, Fernandito was left to enter the sitting room

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

alone to take leave of the ladies, he said. He left them under the charm of his beautiful manners. It was only after his departure that it was noticed that the box of fruit was empty and that my dress was torn. I was punished, and so was Jeanne because she, the elder, had not looked after me. I had to confess that we had been in the forbidden loft. We were accused of having greedily eaten all the fruit, but even then neither of us gave Fernandito away. The little Spanish boy had made an excellent impression on our family. I heard my mother say to my aunt that he might be asked to stay during the holidays, but it so happened that Fernandito never came back to Biarritz during the time we were there. He had returned to that marvelous kingdom from which he had come to dazzle and emancipate us.

Time had to pass and other events to happen before I ceased to believe that the little Marquis de Valadérès had been sent to us as the mysterious envoy of the King of the Children, to teach us the laws of complete disobedience.

The words "San Sebastian" were to our memory like an incantation. It was the name of the Holy Land, the fabulous city where the master of games and pleasures lived, the crowned child Don Alfonso. One day, marked by destiny—I should think it was about a year after Fernandito's visit—my mother,

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

who did not suspect the significance of the magical words she was pronouncing, quietly said after lunch that if the weather were fine the following Sunday we should go to San Sebastian. On hearing this, I threw an old tennis ball I had in my hand at the moment as far as I could; Jack, the fox terrier, jumped after it, I after him, and Jeanne after me, in a mad rampage round the garden. That is how we managed to dissimulate before the grown-ups our wild joy at the news of our projected visit to San Sebastian. The next Sunday was fine. The implacable sun, that sometimes presides over catastrophes and makes them appear long after with greater clearness to the mind's eye, was shining brightly on that spring day. We were to leave for the realm of our dreams, my mother, my sister and I, with our new governess, Mademoiselle Viaud. At the last minute, my mother decided to take our Cousin John, nineteen years of age, who had turned up unexpectedly for a short holiday from Paris where he was studying. John was a great tease, and my sister and I could not bear him. It seemed to us he had betrayed the children's cause. Two years previously, my sister had taken him into our confidence, but since then he had grown up, and we felt that he could no longer understand us, that he had become a deserter, a sort of spy of the grown-ups. As soon as we were in the train going to San Sebastian, he began a satirical description of every-

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

thing he supposed we thought we should see there. At the frontier, he said with a sneer, we should find a Liliputian train the size of the one in the Jardin d'Acclimation in Paris, to take us to the children's country. At San Sebastian all the carriages were drawn by Shetland ponies or by goats. The King would come to meet us riding on his rocking-horse.

I do not know why, but Cousin John's jokes brought me to the verge of tears. From the beginning of the journey everything went wrong. At the Spanish frontier the customs official, who wore green gloves, stuck his thumb into the cake we had brought for tea and then confiscated it. John, the tease, continued to be funny at our expense. Our first misfortune in the children's realm was that we were deprived of our cake. Mademoiselle Viaud had no confidence in Spanish pastries, as she had once had an unfortunate experience with them. In consequence, we had only a plain tea. We wandered through the town, which was filled with a vulgar, noisy crowd, and spent one of those dusty, aimless afternoons, as many children have done both before and since at times of public rejoicing, for this particular Sunday happened to be the seventeenth of May, the birthday of the little king. But he was nowhere to be seen. Most likely he did not guess that two of his faithful subjects from Biarritz had come to greet him on that auspicious occasion.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

In vain did I hope that the crowd would open to allow his carriage to pass. Vainly I imagined him coming out on the beflagged balcony of one of the public buildings, but he remained invisible to the eyes of the two children who believed in him. At the close of the afternoon, as we were sadly making our way back to the station, we saw on the terrace of a café a post-card seller calling out: "See the latest portrait of Don Alfonso, *el Rey d'España!*" I rushed towards him, pulling my governess's sleeve. Too late! The man had sold his last card of the little king and was now mechanically offering wares he no longer had sale for. He showed us what remained—a portrait of the Queen Mother, Maria Christina, and views of San Sebastian, the casino, the harbor. My governess bought a few of these and then asked for stamps. The man pointed out a neighboring tobacconist's shop where they could be bought. We entered.

"There, you see," said Mademoiselle Viaud, "here is a picture of the little king. It is small, but certainly like him." On the tiny piece of pink paper of the stamp was the same small profile that we had seen on the coin shown to us by Isabellita, the same fluffy hair and, hanging from his neck, "the little sheep."

Thanks to Mademoiselle Viaud, our day in San Sebastian had not been an entire failure. This was the first proof I had that in spite of belonging to the



## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

camp of the grown-ups, our governess still retained the divine gift of sympathy.

On our return to Biarritz by the evening express, my mother was pleasantly surprised to find in the compartment a lady whom she knew well and who was in fact a friend she had not seen for some years, the Marquise del Muni. We had often heard my mother mention her as being the *doyenne* of the diplomatic corps when my father was Rumanian Minister in Paris. The two ladies sat near one another, and as I was seated next to my mother I was able to follow the whole conversation.

"Yes," said the Marquise del Muni, "I spent the day yesterday with Their Majesties, at the Pardo, their palace near Madrid. Our young king is a child of remarkable intelligence. But what an admirable educator his mother is! Queen Maria Christina has spent the last ten years looking after the moral and physical welfare of her son. He was a weakly child when he came into the world, but she has made of him a young athlete. Now she is undertaking the education of his mind. I have just seen the program of his studies. It is amazing. Imagine, His Majesty is at present studying eleven hours a day, and this is so cleverly managed that he does it without fatigue. It is a record."

I heard no more. It was enough for me. A world had died; a new world was born! A little later, the Marquis del Muni, the husband of my

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

mother's friend, came back from the dining-car where he had been smoking a cigar. He greeted my mother, and in the course of the conversation he told her it was luck to meet her, as they were now going back to the Embassy, their leave being at an end.

"Do you see that old gentleman?" said Cousin John in his most aggravating way. "*He* is the Ambassador of the King of Spain in Paris."

The King of the Children had all been an invention, and Fernandito was simply nothing.

The day in San Sebastian marks the end of the fabulous period in my existence. I come out of my dreams, suddenly, without transition. History succeeds to fable. The same process takes place in the growth of nations; life begins with legend and ends with lessons. In my eighth year I enter the historical period of my life. I, too, will now have to work and obey. Mademoiselle Viaud, my governess, directs me in my new vocation. She has discovered that my memory is good. She has also discovered the secret that the little king, who has ceased to be an all-powerful myth in the world of fancy, may become a leader and a good example in the schoolroom. She uses the weapon with great skill.

"Think of the little king working eleven hours a day," she said to me. "You have only to work

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

eight hours; that is enough for a little girl. But try and be as good as he is."

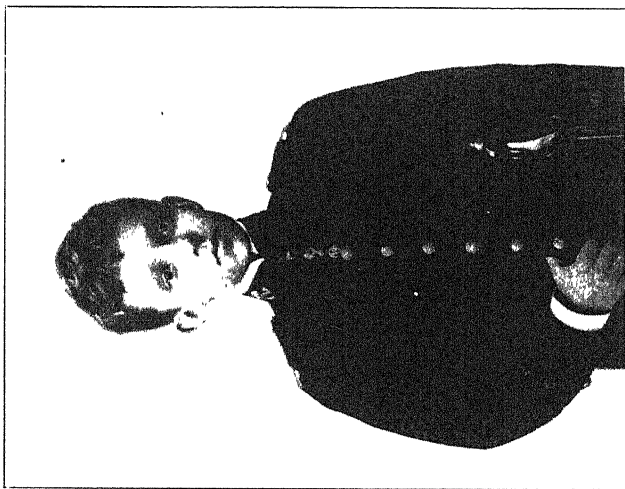
My governess has discovered that I learn with great facility anything I like, which is the case with many children; only by a curious gift I seem never to forget anything. My uncannily good memory begins to interest my governess and is soon to interest my father. Both of them lead me towards historical studies. At every examination at the end of the school year I obtain the maximum marks in history. I know everything about the life of the Greeks and Romans as if I had lived in Athens and Rome. I soon begin to concentrate on the French kings, and the history of other European nations becomes familiar to me, as if I had the faculty of living in past centuries. At this fruitful period of my life, my games in the daytime, my dreams at night, and even my nightmares become historical.

During a long illness of my mother's and an electoral campaign which keeps my father away from us, my sister Jeanne, Mademoiselle Viaud, and I are exiled to an uninhabited estate belonging to our family in Rumania. We live there in great isolation. For our amusement I invent a kind of historical theatrical in which my two companions and I take part. Every evening after dinner I announce what historical characters we are to impersonate that evening. The distribution of the parts always falls to me. One day Mademoiselle Viaud becomes

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Isabella, the Catholic; my sister, Don Fernando, King of Aragon. I receive from their hands, with many low obeisances, a bag of lotto counters, the money intended to finance the expedition which I, Christopher Columbus, am about to undertake to discover America. The following day the scene changes. We enter the century of Louis XIV. The little dilapidated gallery on the first floor of the old country house in which we are living is, by magic, transformed into the *Galérie des Glaces* at Versailles. My sister is Louis XIV. Her long curls floating over her shoulders help to lend illusion to her impersonation of the *Roi Soleil* with his imposing wig. Mademoiselle Viaud plays the part of Madame de Maintenon, to whom she really bears a striking resemblance, having the same severe and regular features. I adopt the part of the Duke of Anjou, the fair-haired grandson of Louis XIV, destined by him for the throne of his grandfather, the King of Spain. I enter the room with modest pride. My other grandfather, Louis XIV, at once exclaims to the imaginary courtiers: "Gentlemen, this is the King of Spain!" I salute the assembly. Madame de Maintenon makes a deep reverence, and I say in a clear voice the famous words: "The Pyrenees no longer exist!"

These wonderful games cease when we leave the old solitary country house, but my memory retains a vivid image of all the historical charac-



*Photograph by M. Pelomeque*

KING ALFONSO OF SPAIN, AGED NINE,  
WEARING THE GOLDEN FLEECE



KING ALFONSO OF SPAIN  
1929

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

ters whom we represented in turns. It so happened that they all more or less belonged to the cycle of King Alfonso's ancestors. This was a mark of posthumous fidelity to the King of our dear old Children's Realm.

I have now reached that stage in my childhood following the historical period which may be called the political period. My father has become Minister for Foreign Affairs. We live among the young priests devoted to that holy book for Foreign Ministers, the cipher code. Among them is our cousin, Antoine Bibesco, one of the attachés of the Cabinet.

On the seventeenth of May, 1902, the King of Spain reached his majority, a great event in my father's first season at the Foreign Office. This date reminded my sister and me of our great disappointment at San Sebastian. The eyewitness who was to describe this important celebration to us was our cousin, Antoine Bibesco, just appointed as the youngest member of the Rumanian Mission to Spain. To-day he is the Rumanian Minister at Madrid, so quickly does the magic of time transform young men, once little boys, into Ambassadors. He gave us on his return all the details of the pompous ceremony, describing the young King leaving the royal palace at two o'clock in the afternoon in a high-wheeled state carriage, having at his side the Queen Mother, Maria Christina, who one

hour later would cease to be Regent. Don Alfonso was then wearing the uniform of a Captain General, with the Golden Fleece, Isabellita's "little sheep," hanging from his neck. In the House of Parliament he had been conducted towards the throne by the president of the Cortès. He looked very pale and slim sitting for the first time on his father's throne. From the Cortès he had gone to the Church of St. Francis to be present at a thanksgiving service. All the bells of the city were ringing and a salvo of guns was fired from the citadel. In front of the high towers of the cathedral two cardinals in their red robes, thirty bishops in their purple vestments, awaited him. He knelt reverently before the altar. Thus, he began his actual reign at the age of sixteen instead of at the age of nine, as we had at first imagined. But at this time I had already read too much history not to pity him for beginning his reign so terribly young.

Soon afterwards we heard fragments of conversation at my father's table about the negotiations then being conducted by the Spanish Minister Silvela with a view to arranging the participation of Spain in Moroccan affairs. As children whose parents are interested in horse racing know by name the winning and the losing horses, we had become familiar with the names of all the statesmen in Europe. We heard that preliminary conversations had taken place between Spain, France, and Eng-

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

land. Then came one of those "*coups de théâtre*" peculiar to German diplomacy. The impulsive Emperor William II sailed unexpectedly into Vigo harbor, and rumors were current in diplomatic circles that he had come to offer the young King of Spain his menacing friendship and the hand of a German princess. Nevertheless, the first official visit to the head of a State made by Don Alfonso was not to Berlin but to Paris.

My sister Jeanne has been married for a year and lives in Paris with her young husband, who is in the diplomatic service. Her letters to me are full of interesting details about this first official journey of Don Alfonso beyond the confines of his own kingdom. She takes part in all the fêtes and writes to me:

Paris has lost its head and heart to the King of Spain. Do you remember our games on the beach at Biarritz, our pledge of fidelity to Don Alfonso, King of the Children and his Ambassador Fernandito? Well, do you know that poor Fernandito will never become an Ambassador! Marquise del Muni, who is still Ambassadors in Paris, told me the other day that she had just heard of his death. He died of consumption at the age of twenty. I could not help feeling sad when I remembered his lovely manners, his greediness, and our admiration for him. How remote all that seems! Nevertheless, I can assure you that all the women in Paris are not a whit less foolish about the King of Spain than we were then. Don Alfonso has become the King of the



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Parisiennes. There has been an incredible outburst of enthusiasm, an explosion of monarchical loyalism in this Republic such as has never before been seen or heard. Those who witnessed the Franco-Russian *fêtes* given for the Czar declare they were nothing in comparison with those of to-day. Then, you see, this sovereign is only nineteen years old, and the word *chic* seems to have been invented for him. One feels, too, that by inheritance he belongs to this country. At his side old Loubet, smiling in his white beard, looks like a venerable family tutor. They say the Queen Mother has written him a private letter recommending her son to his care. I am under the impression that every man in this country would gladly give his life for him and that all the women seem to live for him alone. He is the subject of all conversations, of every newspaper article; his portrait is everywhere. The frenzy began at the very moment he stepped out of the train at the Bois de Boulogne station. His first smile conquered Paris. I saw him stepping into his carriage and already the people had gone crazy. You ought to have heard the cheers that followed him from the Avenue du Bois down to the Etoile and along the whole length of the Champs Elysées. We all seem to have gone mad.

Everywhere—last night at the Elysée, yesterday afternoon at the Hotel de Ville, during those ceremonies which are usually so tedious, but which have suddenly become amusing by his presence, he appears like a dancing ray of sunshine. He is jovial and gay and his gayety is attuned to that of Paris. I don't know how he manages it, but his dignity does not suffer from the youthful exuberance which he does his best to suppress. At times he is just a Paris schoolboy, at others the most kingly of men. His chief charm lies perhaps

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

in the fact that he is not at all what one might call good-looking if beauty is to be measured by regularity of feature, which one doubts after having seen him. You, who love flowers, will understand me. He has not the profile of the rose, but what is still better, the profile of the orchid, the chin of a *Cypripedium*.

The second letter from my sister describes the Grand Prix d'Auteuil, where all the women vie with one another in elegance. Every one wants to attract the King's attention, because he himself is the center of attraction. Then, after so much worldly entertainment comes a serious note, full of grandeur. On the morning of the thirty-first of May, Don Alfonso is received at Notre Dame by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Richard, surrounded by his canons. The King is led to the Chapel of Notre Dame de Compassion and kneels before the sacred relics, the crown of thorns brought to France by Saint Louis in 1237 and the reliquary of this King whom the Church has canonized. On the altar of the first cathedral of France, the bones of Saint Louis are presented for the veneration of this son of Saint Louis. On the evening of that same day Paris is magnificently illuminated in honor of the King of Youth. It is the last night in May and a great gala at the Opera has brought together all the beauty and grandeur of Paris. Then, on his way back, the King is faced by death and the miracle happens, as if Saint Louis

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

had heard his prayer in the morning and had extended his protection to his descendant.

At the corner of the rue de Rohan and the rue de Rivoli [my sister writes], a bomb was thrown at the carriage occupied by the King and the President. Like a flash of lightning Death appears, to be as quickly conjured. The King springs to his feet, and his first impulse is to assure himself of the safety of the old President at his side. Then, reassured, he simply says to the President: "Such are the risks of the trade." He then steps down and helps in the work of rescue. For innocent blood has been shed; among the wounded is a little girl of fourteen, Marie Lebrun. The horror at this attempt on the life of a guest, the outraged sense of hospitality and the honor of the French people, the thought of the absent mother shake the whole country with emotion. This event brings the King's popularity to the highest pitch. In a country where physical courage is so highly esteemed, he has given convincing proof of his heroism. The following morning, at the military camp at Chalons, where the King is seen galloping at the head of his escort, the troops he reviews know that the night before he had received his baptism of fire. An immense emotion holds the whole population. France feels a mother's love for this son of the Bourbons, and the Republic, indulgent, allows this explosion of loyalism towards a King who is a foreigner.

[On the 2nd of July, on the principal balcony of the Palace of Versailles, before the dazzling spectacle of the playing fountains, is he not in the eyes of all the son who has returned to the home of his

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

fathers? Versailles is empty, respectfully empty. The Republic has never dared to inhabit the palace of Louis XIV. It seems as if the whole place has been waiting for more than a century for Alfonso to revive its glory. On the balcony of the *Galérie des Glaces*, where his ancestor, the Duke of Anjou, received the crown of Spain, the King leans forward to view the perspective of those gardens which are unique in the world. "He seemed to have his soul in his eyes," writes my sister, who watched him from the *parterre* where the crowd had gathered and cheered frantically when he appeared. Standing at the side of the slender young King, President Loubet smiles benevolently. More than ever he looks like the old steward who is showing the estate to the descendant of the family. Alfonso XIII at Versailles, in the Palace of the *Roi Soleil*, seems like a ray of the spring sun come back.

## THE KING OF THE YOUNG

Only one year later, in the month of May, 1906, he who had once been for us the King of the Children became by some marvelous imaginative process the ideal *fiancé* of all the girls. In a few days, in his capital of Madrid, Don Alfonso will marry the Princess Victoria Eugenia of Battenberg, niece of Edward VII, King of England. If I had to analyze in what the strength of monarchical sentiment con-

sists, I should say it lies in mental substitution. Every old maid in the British Empire really possesses a home and family as long as her Queen has one! They are wives and mothers by proxy. If the King or one of the young Princes falls ill, they will worry about his health and rejoice at his recovery, passing through the alternative stages of hope and fear through which a wife or a mother goes. The whole nation participates in the joys and sorrows of this one family. The affairs of the royal house form a subject of conversation for those who, as a rule, would have no conversation. If a King or a Prince marries, his betrothal and marriage are a beautiful romance to all those who live without romance of their own or whose life history has been neither romantic nor beautiful.

This feeling is so true to human nature that it often extends to people who are republicans in a republican country. They, too, take a passionate interest in what happens in royal families in countries which are quite foreign to them. In this lies the secret of the communion of spirit between the crowds and those who represent for them happiness in this world.

In an old town garden in Bucharest, where the lilacs are in bloom, a group of eager young girls, among whom are my cousins Hélène, Anne, Simone and myself, the youngest, surround and question

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

Uncle Jacques, the General Lahovary, my father's brother, who is to leave in a few hours for Madrid, where he will represent the King of Rumania at the festivities on the occasion of the marriage of Alfonso XIII. Uncle Jacques is a smart-looking old soldier, with a long white mustache and an eyeglass, behind which sparkles an eye still youthful and humorous. He seems amused by our enthusiasm and our incessant questions. I am apparently the most insistent.

"Will you come with me to the wedding?" he asks.

"Of course," I say.

But this is only a joke. Those whom the festivities would interest most, young women and girls, are not invited.

"When will your old protocol become intelligent?" I say to my uncle. "The representatives of the various countries to the marriages of young Kings ought always to be young girls."

Uncle Jacques laughs and pulls his white mustache. He thinks I am right. This rather long journey he is obliged to take amuses him so very much less than it would his daughters or me. He is tired of official missions and representing his King and country. For reasons that the chancelleries have kept secret, the royal wedding, which ought to have taken place ten days earlier, has been postponed, and for various internal political reasons

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Uncle Jacques has seen his plans upset. They say that the young English Princess had to become a Roman Catholic before she could share the throne of Spain, and it had required all the authority of Edward VII as head of the Church of England to make this abjuration acceptable to English public opinion. Romantic young girls that we were, we had never thought of this difficulty. This, probably, was the reason why my uncle's plans had been overturned. He was absorbed by the difficulties of his own government. Parliament is still sitting in Bucharest, and the Cabinet is none too stable. Political preoccupations should retain him here. I see with dismay that he would prefer not to take this journey to Madrid, which is for him only an honorable but tiresome duty. I tremble with impatience and try to bring him to my state of mind:

"But think, you will see the wedding of the great grandson of Louis XIV, of the heir of Charles V and of Philip II, the representative of the rival houses of France and Austria in one! And you will see her, the bride, to whom all this glory will belong."

This effervescence of imagination obviously amuses Uncle Jacques. He looks at me quizzically through his eyeglass.

"Come on," he says, "and choose among these ribbons as a consolation. It's more a job for a

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

young woman like yourself than for an old campaigner."

He takes me to his study, where, to my astonishment, I see a collection of broad *moiré* ribbons on the table. Uncle Jacques is Chancellor of the Royal Orders and in this capacity he has to choose for his sovereign's approval the color for the new Grand Cordon to be instituted for the jubilee of King Carol. There are different shades of blue, light and dark: cornflower blue, lavender blue, forget-me-not blue. . . .

"Your choice will be mine," says my uncle.

An idea flashes into my head. I know that one day every king and every chief of State who is friendly to my country will receive this order, will wear this ribbon, and Don Alfonso will be among them. . . . I search among the ribbons for one resembling most closely that of the obsolete Bourbon order of the Holy Ghost, abolished by the Revolution. That is the order that is to be seen in the famous pictures in the Louvre and at Versailles, hanging from the neck of Henri IV, in his portrait by Rubens, across the chest of Louis XIV in his portrait by Rigaud, or among the lace at the neck of Louis XV, the Beloved, painted by La Tour.

I point out to my uncle a ribbon of the shade of Nigellas, the real color of love-in-a-mist.

"This is my choice," said I. And no one knew



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

that this was my secret wedding gift to the King of Spain.

Uncle Jacques has gone. We impatiently await the despatches giving details of the great event, the illustrated newspapers and perhaps a letter. But it is doubtful whether Uncle Jacques will have time for writing. We shall have to wait until his return to hear the report of an eyewitness at this grand wedding. He will have to satisfy our thousand curiosities and answer our thousand questions. Before he left we laid stress on what he is to notice particularly. He is to note the exact shade of the young queen's hair. Is it fairer or darker than that of her cousin, the Crown Princess Marie of Rumania? From her portraits she appears to be the fairer of the two. . . . The jewels, the presents, the dresses, the uniforms of past ages. . . . Uncle Jacques promises to observe everything for our benefit, and from the feminine point of view. He is not to forget that besides being King Carol's envoy, he is *our* special plenipotentiary at King Alfonso's wedding.

In the restful city garden where the lilacs are fading and the pink chestnut trees have already shed their blossoms, and where the syringas have begun to perfume the air, our group of girls in their light summer dresses gathers every evening to comment on the big event reported in the news-

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

papers. We already know that on the fifteenth of May at Irun, the little frontier station between France and Spain, which we once passed, Jeanne and I, on our way to San Sebastian, the young King has rushed to meet his *fiancée*. On touching Spanish ground, it is said, Princess Ena kissed the folds of the Spanish flag of the first regiment which had come to salute her. The whole of the population gathered to watch the meeting and to strew the ground with spring flowers. She trod on flowers on her entry into this ancient and magnificent realm of Spain that love has made hers. For five consecutive days the despatches in the newspapers of the whole world seem to be invented by the author of the Tales of Mother Goose. They speak only of gilded coaches, purple silk harness on white horses with white plumes on their heads. Nothing else is spoken of but Princes and Princesses who are on their way to take part in this wonderful betrothal. From England come the Prince and Princess of Wales. From all four corners of the earth crowned heads leave for Madrid. The Kings of Europe know that this King is the youngest among them and at the same time their senior. What in comparison with his dynasty is the dynasty of Russia, the Romanoffs, who have not yet reached their third century? The Saxe-Coburg family are nothing but newcomers on the greatest throne of the world, that of England! From the point of view

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

of royal blood, the English royal family are making a good match. William II, the boastful emperor of Germany, is but the heir of the insignificant Elector of Brandenburg, who reigned over a mere handful of Prussians when Charles V, predecessor of King Alfonso, could say with truth that the sun never set on the Spanish Empire. The house of Savoy is in Rome a dynasty of the nineteenth century, as are the Bernadottes in Sweden, the Saxe-Coburgs in Brussels, and the Hohenzollerns in Bucharest. Austria alone could bear comparison, but is not Don Alfonso a Hapsburg on his mother's side? As for precedence, he has been a King for longer than most of them. His reign is already one of the longest in Europe, since it began nominally before his birth, as Isabellita had once told us mysteriously. This, the Kings and their courtiers know well. But what the crowd, the man in the street who reads the papers, know better is that Don Alfonso is twenty and that he is in love.

In the garden of our girlhood we know it, too. My cousins and I seem to live during those few days in the highly romantic atmosphere of a Europe which seems to be entirely affianced to the King of Spain. The nuptial ceremony has been definitely fixed for the thirty-first of May. This fact is officially announced in the newspapers. I mistrust this date. My infallible memory gives me a warning that I am careful not to mention in case I should

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

be considered superstitious. My sister Jeanne's letter is still in my mind.

"During the night of the thirty-first of May to the first of June, at the corner of the rue de Rohan and the rue de Rivoli. . . ."

Since the morning, the syringas are in full blossom. They look like wedding bouquets, they are the orange flowers of northern countries, and they have the same shape and something of the same sweet fragrance. The wedding dress of the royal bride seems to haunt like a ghost the shadowy part of the garden where the syringas bloom. The illustrated newspapers have already reproduced and described this dress. Our imagination has only to embellish it. The train is five yards in length. It is entirely covered with embroidery of silver *fleurs-de-lis*, the lilies of France, the lilies of Saint Louis, transplanted by the will of Louis XIV in the garden of Spain. The rose of England forms a garland around the edge of the train. Near those heraldic flowers are orange blossoms, which grow in Spain, the symbol of virginity, with which all the girls of the world are entitled to adorn themselves.

Midday is about to strike. Every minute becomes more precious. The great bells will begin to ring from San Jeronimo. It is not very difficult to imagine the present when one knows the past well. In the shadowy garden I tell my cousins of the grandiose marriage of Louis XIV and the Infanta

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Maria-Theresa, on the Pheasant's Island in the Bidassoa; of the wedding of Philip the Handsome and Joan the Mad; of Marie de Bourgogne and the Emperor Maximilian; Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic; Louis VIII and Blanche de Castile. . . . All those celebrated royal couples now lying on their couches of stone in the most famous cathedrals of the world, at Bruges, at Granada, at the Escorial, at Saint-Denis, all those men and women of whose great actions we read in books will be thrilled in the dust of their graves because the heir to their glories is to be wedded on this very morning.

In the syringa-scented garden, four girls are bending over Don Alfonso's portrait in the latest illustrated newspapers.

"It must be a curious sensation to kiss some one who looks so much like some one else painted by Velásquez three hundred years ago," said Simone, who is herself a painter.

"What I should love to see at the wedding," Hélène said, "are the horses." She is a good horse-woman and looks after her father's stables.

And I. . . . I think of the flowers. . . . Just think of them. . . . All the red carnations of Spain, heaps and heaps of them, thrown from every window. . . .

In front of Number 88 of the Calle Major, [said the official despatch] a bomb hidden in a bouquet was

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

thrown from a window on the fourth story and fell on the state carriage. The King and his bride are safe. Outriders, valets, three officers, and nine men of the Wad-Ras regiment who formed the guard were killed. Twenty-eight dead and forty wounded, one of the horses which was drawing the carriage killed. . . . The King, who retained all his self-control, helped the trembling Queen. . . .

It was I who had said that I should have liked to see the bouquets of flowers thrown from the windows. . . .

"Well," said Uncle Jacques on his return, "do you still regret not having been present at the marriage of the King of Spain?"

"More than ever," said I.

We surround him, smother him with questions. He is a soldier, had been to war in his youth. He took part in the siege of Plevna, and he says he has never seen such a terrible scene of carnage—this scene of war without war, those dead soldiers, those disemboweled horses, in the midst of this *fête*. The anarchist, Mateo Morral, who had thrown the bomb hidden in the bouquet, had been found. He was a madman and a monster. If he did not hesitate before the accomplishment of a political crime, could the innocence of this young girl, in her wedding veils, not make him pause?

Uncle Jacques describes the dress embroidered

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

with lilies and sprinkled with blood. The King lifted his young queen in his arms and carried her fainting to the empty state carriage, for, in accordance with old Spanish etiquette, an empty carriage, called the Coach of Respect, always precedes the carriage occupied by the sovereigns. On this occasion the empty carriage had helped to remove the queen at once from this dreadful scene. As for the King, he had personally superintended the removal of the wounded and ascertained the number of men who had been killed in his service. His conduct had been heroic, chivalrous, humane, and it had made on his people and on all the foreign Princes and envoys an immense impression which could never be effaced. Not a gesture, not a word from this young man of twenty during all this dreadful commotion but had been full of charity, grandeur, and perfect self-control.

As Uncle Jacques said: "He spoke the right words, thought of every one, gave intelligent and effective orders." The great court ball set for that evening did not take place, as a sign of mourning for those who had found death in his service.

He had decided that the victims of the attempt on his life, Sergeant Tommaso Ovideo and the other soldiers, should be buried at the King's own expense and with royal honors. Instead of answering the telegrams wishing him happiness on his wedding

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

day, King Alfonso had to answer telegrams congratulating him on having escaped death with his young wife. Replying to the one President Loubet sent him, the King made allusion to a similar happening on this same date, the thirty-first of May, when he had shared the dangers of another bomb at the side of the President of the Republic.

"He is a King," said my uncle, "and he also is a great gentleman."

These two attempts on the life of King Alfonso were only preludes. In the years to come he is the only young man in Europe who, in the midst of peace, lives dangerously, as if for him alone the coming war had already begun. He passes through that zero hour which the soldiers in the trenches from 1914 to 1918 will have to experience. That hour struck for him in his twentieth year. Each time he leaves his palace—and he goes out very often because he loves sport, because he is young and enjoys life as only those do who live under a perpetual menace—each time he goes out it is as if he were going "over the top." And he goes about alone and unarmed. There is no guard to relieve him. No one can ever replace him at his dangerous post. That young body, so carefully trained by Queen Maria Christina, as Marquise del Muni once told my mother, has become a living target. What protection can he find against such



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

a horrible death? His agility, his physical resistance, his training, his fitness, his health, the masterpiece of a watchful mother who has succeeded in improving nature, will be of no avail to him against the *embusqués* of political murder who kill from behind a hedge.

His people love him and encourage him with their love. But one evening wires are found stretched across the road in the dark where, skillful but rash automobilist as he is, he would be caught in this deadly lasso. His hunter's piercing sight, however, reveals the danger to him in time to stop the car. But another time . . . and if the night were still darker?

The attempts at assassination follow without resembling each other. The imaginative resources of the anarchists seem endless. And even then the whole truth is not divulged in the newspapers. One day his train leaves the rails; another time a man walks towards him during a review with a petition in his hand and fires a revolver directly at the King. But Don Alfonso makes his horse rear with so much skill that once again he is saved . . . the horse alone is wounded in the chest. Yes, the King of Spain lives dangerously, like a soldier in the first line of trenches, and a soldier's reward means nothing to him. Mentioned in Army Orders? But he has no hierarchical chief who can do this for him. Advancement? He is a king. Decorations? He

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

had them all in his cradle. If heroism in its purest form, without hope of reward, exists anywhere on this earth, it is to be found on the throne of Spain. Each time the papers speak of another of these criminal attempts, my sister and I send each other the cuttings. A whole collection of them exists in a book in which Jeanne and I patiently stuck them, to be reread some time when we are old. But Jeanne was never to become an old woman. . . .

## THE KING OF THE GROWN-UPS

I made my first trip to Spain in the month of May, 1914. It was very different from what it would have been only a year before. A few months previously I had lost my sister Jeanne, and it seems to me that I have buried with her my whole childhood. She and I had been the last survivors of a disappearing world, that of the children of Biarritz. She who had told me that Fernandito had died at twenty had followed him soon after to that other shore which Isabellita had reached long ago. It seemed to me that I was speaking a language to myself that no one else could ever understand, and I should cease to speak it. My readiness to believe in fairy tales has ceased with my childhood, my faculty for enthusiasm has finished with my girlhood, but another force has been born in me, the critical spirit. I shall rely on it to guide me through

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

life henceforth. This, of course, is still an illusion of youth, but I am unaware of it.

In order to distract my mind from my grief after my sister's death, an opportunity is offered me to visit Spain with one of my French friends, the Marquise de Ganay, who knows the whole country through which she has traveled several times. She is very fond of pictures and quite an authority on art, as she organizes a great exhibition of painting in Paris every year. She wishes to see and show me an exhibition of Goya's works which is soon to take place in Madrid. This exhibition is the end and aim of our journey. The critical spirit in me urges me to go to Spain only to see ancient towns and citadels, museums and galleries, old churches and cathedrals, but not to see the King. It has become the fashion, and I do not like fashion in matters of sentiment. The King is charming; therefore he charms. Everybody knows it, and it has become a commonplace. Then somebody has told me the story of a silly girl to whom the King had given the ordinary attentions usually paid to foreigners of note passing through Spain. She had overestimated what was merely politeness on his part. She came back the following year, then every succeeding year, in the hope of being invited to the royal polo match where she had first met the King. In the end she had annoyed the Court so much with her constant requests for invitations that they had at last ceased

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

to ask her at all. And when the King was on his way to the polo ground, all Madrid was laughing at the girl watching his arrival, half hidden behind a tree. There was no doubt she lacked the critical faculty.

"I respect the person of the King, I admire his great courage, but I have decided not to go to the polo grounds this afternoon," said I to M. Georges Crétziano, our Minister at Madrid, on the day of my arrival. He had come to see me and brought most amiably an invitation for the royal polo match which was to take place that afternoon.

My refusal seemed to annoy M. Crétziano. He gave me to understand that it was impossible not to accept an invitation which he had specially secured for me. When a foreigner came to Madrid, it was the custom for the representative of his country to take this step, and once the invitation was issued it would put the Minister in a false position towards the Court if it were declined. Spanish etiquette is no joking matter. I had not the slightest intention of giving offense to M. Crétziano, who was at the same time a relative and a friend. But if I gave way, what would become of my critical sense? After thinking the matter over and discovering that the museums would be closed at five o'clock, just when the match began, I concluded that after all a game of polo is not an audi-

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

ence, I could leave when I liked, and as our departure for Granada was fixed for the next day, the matter was of no importance. I therefore made up my mind to follow my Minister's advice and go with him to the match.

The match has already begun when we arrive. The team of Don Alfonso plays against the team of the Duke of Alba. The King is at such a distance that I would need an opera glass to see him and I have not got one. That purple dot over there must be he, galloping far away at the end of the polo grounds. Purple, the color of Castile, explains the Duke of San Pedro, the Lord Chamberlain, who stands beside me. He points out the Duke of Alba, all in white as his name implies. But here the polo players approach, a vigorous stroke sends the ball off to a great distance, and it comes back in our direction. The King gallops towards the grandstand at the head of his team. I see him riding fast; he seems to be too light even for his light horse. His purple tunic floats about him. He spurs his pony on faster than before. The pony advances, the arm of the King is outstretched to hit the ball, and under his cap I see his determined chin protrude. He is gone already.

"The King is like quicksilver, isn't he?" asks the Duke of San Pedro. "He plays with such fury that the other day he had a bad spill and was uncon-

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

scious for twenty minutes. Fancy, twenty minutes without knowing if there was still a King of Spain! We were all green with fear. After that happened, the Ministers met in council to remonstrate respectfully and ask him to give up polo playing. The King thanked them very politely for their solicitude on his behalf, but flatly refused to give up his game. What would his life be without movement or distraction so that he could forget his political worries?"

Meanwhile, the King has won the game against the Duke of Alba. We can go. But I am told that Spanish etiquette will not allow us to leave before the King. Seen from a short distance, Don Alfonso looks still less than his age, especially when he smiles. "He is of course obliged to smile when people are introduced to him; that is inevitable," whispers the critical spirit. I was a stranger, an unknown guest, who happened to be on the path he had chosen to walk back to the grandstand. There is certainly grace in his manners and movements, and the way he bows is peculiar to him. He pulls himself together as if he were taking up invisible reins to keep an unruly steed in hand—his body. In observing him, I understood what Jeanne once said when she spoke of his face looking like an orchid: the longish oval, the elegance and the protruding chin, like that of a *Cypripedium*. Don Alfonso and I have at last met, but the critical spirit may rest assured. The

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

King will never know the children of Biarritz; they are all dead.

The Goya exhibition, the reason or pretext for our trip to Spain, is to open at Madrid three days later than we thought. Some pictures coming from private collections have not been sent in time for the inauguration to take place on the date announced. The Marquise de Ganay and I take advantage of this fact to visit Toledo, Cordova, and Granada. The Duke of San Pedro is an Andalusian. He has invited us to visit his castle in Andalusia. In accordance with these plans we shall have to leave Madrid the next day. But not without having made a first visit to the Prado Museum, which is just in front of our hotel. There is only the street to cross, and we shall find there the most famous and magnificent paintings of Velásquez, Titian, and El Greco.

I did not think that I should see the King of Spain again so soon and so often. As the spring when it arrives is to be seen everywhere and nowhere, so Don Alfonso in the Prado Museum at Madrid. It is not his likeness alone with the Kings and Princes, his ancestors. It is not his blood alone; it is his *style* that one finds in the pictures in the Prado. That warrior, who salutes his defeated enemy, in the famous painting, "The Lancias," does

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

not belong to the royal family of Spain, but he is a Spaniard, and the genius of Velásquez has given him this sort of grand air, this manner which is so remarkable in the King. It is very astonishing for a newcomer to have seen Don Alfonso yesterday playing polo, and to-day to see the picture of Charles V by Titian. This horse with outstretched neck, that outstretched arm, this protruding chin—I have seen all that quite recently. In the "Man with the White Cloak" of El Greco I find the mat complexion, the curious brilliancy of the eyes which shine even against the light. Supreme product of the influences of air and light in a country, combined during many centuries with its spiritual forces, Don Alfonso belongs from head to foot to the Spanish School.

You must give up hope of not seeing the King of Spain if you remain in Spain. He is the spirit that haunts the towns where he does not live, even more so than those where he generally is living. We find him again at Granada in the Catholic Kings' Chapel, with Ferdinand and Isabella, at Toledo in entering the town. Here at the entrance of the town, at the Alcantara Gate, we are told that he alone enters here on horseback, leaving his carriage, as no King of Spain can enter otherwise but riding into Toledo, and a voice calls from the tower: "Who asks entrance?" A voice answers: "Charles V."



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

And from the tower the voice says: "Charles V is dead." The answer comes: "No! King Alfonso XIII." And the gates open.

In the cathedral we are taken to the Door of Forgiveness, which only opens for him. As long as I am in Spain there is no getting away from the King. Even the money obliges one to think of him. There is a subtle power of suggestion in the antique custom of having the King's face impressed on each coin. Every man's treasure is but the collection of his King's portraits. "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also," says the Gospel. I look at the money in my hand: five pesetas 1888. Here is a baby of two years old bearing already on his round face the infinitely delicate signs of his race. Two pesetas 1896. A little boy with fluffy hair, the King of the Children to whom Isabellita made us take the oath of fidelity. On a coin of 1900, here are the elongated features of the little boy who works eleven hours a day. He already wears a military collar, and the "little sheep" hangs from his neck. A crown piece of 1905, the young man of nineteen whom Jeanne saw on his visit to Paris, standing on the balcony at Versailles amid the shouts of the delirious crowd. 1906, the portrait of the betrothed. I cannot change money at the station or in an antique dealer's shop without betting with myself and wondering which of my souvenirs will be given back to me, and if the

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

change includes coins of the reigns of King Alfonso's predecessors, Alfonso XII or Queen Isabella II, I feel I have lost.

The critical spirit inspires me with the thought that King Alfonso is nothing more to me or to anybody else than a living image of the past. In fact, the dead past come to life. I had to return to Madrid to be convinced that besides the gift of challenging death in so many ways by surviving the centuries as the representative of his race and by escaping so often by miracle from his murderers, King Alfonso also possessed the gift of those able to construct the future.

The opening of the Goya exposition took place on the thirtieth of May, but before our departure, which was fixed for the next day, the Marquise de Ganay and I are to be received in audience by the Queen. Our old friend, the Duke of San Pedro, is to accompany us. He will come to fetch us an hour before the audience, which is to take place at midday. He has received an order from the King to show us the *Armeria*, where the arms of the kings of Spain are kept and the royal palace, where we shall be shown the throne-room, the chapel, the gardens, and the royal stables.

"The King at fifteen years of age could wear the armor of Charles V," said the Duke of San Pedro, showing it to us. "But at sixteen he was too big for

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

it. He developed so quickly. All these magnificent arms, a single piece of which would make the fortune of a museum, are but the war wardrobe of his ancestors. He can play with them all. I cannot help thinking that all these breastplates, these gold and steel helmets, which were intended to make the warriors invulnerable on the battlefield, can be of no real use to their descendant threatened by melinite. So he goes to meet death with no other arm than his gallantry."

After the *Armeria* we shall have to see the stables and carriage-houses. We visit first the state carriages and then the horses. Among the riding horses the Duke of San Pedro picks out a beautiful chestnut horse.

"Here is the King's favorite charger. It is the one that was wounded during the last attempt on his life." We enter the box. On the quivering chest of the thoroughbred the trace of the wound is still visible. On the wall above his head I read the inscription: "Alarun, by Lisbon and Alegrin." I call "Alarun." The horse turns his lovely head slowly and looks at me with his soft intelligent eyes.

At the top of the great staircase of Charles III, the double golden doors are flung open. We enter the empty throne-room. We admire at leisure the famous ceiling by Tiepolo, the purple dais, the bronze lions guarding the steps of the

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

throne which the royal infant had to climb as soon as he was able to stand on his feet. On the floor lies a fabulously beautiful carpet which represents the two hemispheres, over which the Kings of Spain ruled at the time the sun could never set on their empire, so vast was it. That was the time when a mere man could call himself King of Spain, Emperor of Germany, sovereign of Flanders, Naples, Sicily, master of one good half of France, sovereign in India and in the two Americas. Universal monarchy was then very nearly an accomplished fact, especially after Philip II had married Mary, Queen of England. This great aim—the political unity of the world, the idea that later haunted Napoleon—has never since been so near realization.

After the throne-room we visited the royal chapel. Here is the spot where the King kneels and has to go through an astounding ceremony every Holy Thursday. He and the Queen have to wash the feet of twelve of the poorest of the poor, who represent the twelve apostles. This symbolical ceremony is destined to reëstablish the human equilibrium in the soul of those Kings who might have been driven mad with pride by the investiture of so much power at a time when the allegory of the carpet was simply the expression of a geographical truth.

When we left the chapel, we returned to the magnificent sitting-rooms which led to the Queen's

apartment. The charming Duchess of San Carlos, the Camerera Major, is to introduce us to the Queen. The niece of Edward VII is tall and handsome. Her hair is just as blond as we had imagined it to be in the time of our girlhood in the syringa-scented garden. She receives us with the graceful dignity and simplicity of an English Princess. Our audience with the Queen finished at half-past twelve. An aide-de-camp comes forward and without any other explanation leads the Marquise de Ganay and myself into a small study which seems charmingly *intime* after the immensity of the grand *salons* through which we have just passed. We are in the presence of the King. Sitting beside him, I see in his eyes that singular brilliancy, that interior ray which leads one to believe that there is a *fête* going on in his mind, a sort of mental illumination. The first impression of him, the strongest impression, is one of personality. Then it seems incredible he should be so vividly himself when the strong characteristics of his race ought to have left him so little chance of being an individual.

"I have seen Alarun," I say to him, just as simply and with as much confidence as if I had met him on the shores of Biarritz in the time of Isabellita, or in the forbidden loft in the time of Fernandito. Strangely, it seems to me that he answers in exactly the same tone.

"Oh, you have seen Alarun! I am so pleased. I

DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

wanted you to see him. If you feel any friendship for me. . . . But do you?"

That is what is called a direct question.

My answer is, "Yes," just as direct as was the question.

"Well," said he, "since you feel some sympathy for me, you must also feel some for Alarun. He saved my life the other day when that man fired at me three times."

"Oh! I know that," said I, and I add with so much good faith that he does not seem to notice the stupidity of my remark: "It must have been dreadful. Wasn't it?"

"Yes," said he, "it was terrible enough. Nevertheless, you know, I much prefer the revolver to the bomb, and I shall tell you why. A revolver shot: I get it or I don't, but it is for me alone. As for the bomb, it scatters in every direction and always kills so many people around me and also poor innocent animals." And he adds with his half-smile which makes him seem so young: "You know, I say that just as other people would say they prefer peaches to plums or Velázquez to Titian."

While he is speaking, I think what a gift of expression he has. He is witty. As a rule, Kings are never witty. They expect their interlocutors to be. He speaks French to perfection, but his Spanish accent gives color to the words, as it does with all the people of the south, and this helps me to believe

that I have come back to Biarritz to the realm of my childhood. I am on the verge of asking him if he had really sent Fernandito to us on that far-off Easter holiday, so evident it seems to me that he must have guessed something of that mysterious past that I believed I had buried with Isabellita, with Fernandito, and with poor Jeanne. Happily, I am prevented from saying anything foolish by the King, who now questions the Marquise de Ganay and me about our impressions of Spain. She has been here before; does she not think there is some progress? Spain! When he utters the word, it seems to me it is a lover pronouncing the name of the beloved. He says he would like to give her roads worthy of her, modern roads, to bring her splendors within reach. He wishes to replant the forests, irrigate the fields, give her water and shade and prosperity. Passionately fond of motoring and a good shot, he knows his country under every aspect. He ends the conversation by saying that he hopes to come to France next autumn and the Marquise de Ganay asks him to come and shoot partridges at her place at Courance, near Fontainebleau. He accepts the invitation.

In bidding us good-by, he tells us that this afternoon he will play the polo match, the Ladies' Nominative, and invites us to go and watch it. Turning toward me, he says graciously: "I shall play for you this afternoon if you will allow me." This slightly

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

cryptic phrase sounds strange to me because it resembles what the King of the Children might have said to me years and years ago.

In leaving the royal palace the Duke of San Pedro revealed to me the real meaning of these enigmatic words which had made me believe for a short instant that the King of the Children had spoken to me in our old language. The explanation was simple. Every year a challenge cup was played for on the Madrid polo grounds between the King's team and another. This time the King was to play against the Duke of Alba. The game to which we had been invited the week before was merely a preliminary practice in view of to-day's great match, and since we were in Spain, the land of chivalry, the custom was that each team should choose their lady in honor of whom the game would be played. The King had done me the honor of choosing me. The Duke of Alba would play for the Marquise de Ganay. She was to be the white lady and I the purple. The lady whose team won would be presented with a little jewel representing the Club's crest, as a memento, and in exchange she would send to the Club an engraving or picture to be kept as a remembrance in the Club sitting-room. "Beware," thought I to myself. "Shall I not be like the girl behind the tree next year?" But there is no danger; the critical sense is on the alert.



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

On their polo ponies, whose coats shine under the bright sun of Spain like costly satin, the players were already making a trial gallop when we arrived. The King turns his horse, which brings him back in front of the royal enclosure. He salutes with a graceful gesture and says to me in a clear voice:

"I play for you, Madam, and hope to win."

Oh, how I should like to bring him luck!

"This wish is vain," whispers the critical spirit.

The match begins with ardor and is pursued with varying luck. 6-3, 6-6, 6-4. First the purple triumphs, then the white, then again the white. At last the purple, and finally, alas! the white. But the King is a good loser. He comes back to the enclosure with a smile. The men take their hats off; the women rise from their seats. He leans for one moment over the railing and says: "I have had no luck to-day. Will you forgive me for having lost your game?"

"There's an old French children's game," said I, "which is called '*A qui perd gagne*,' which means he who loses wins. It seems to me that I have been playing this game to-day."

"One must know how to play this game," said he, "all one's life. I, as a King, must play it often, be patient, and wait for better luck. This was not, to begin with, in my nature. I had to be trained by a very lengthy process before I knew how to control

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

myself. Even now, I often wish I could hit those who oppose my will. Then I come to the polo ground. I hit the ball, and sometimes I give it somebody's name."

I am careful not to ask him what name he has recently had to give to the ball. It would be talking politics, and strangers must never do that in a country that welcomes them.

I left beautiful Spain the day after. The last words of the King, telling me of the necessity of games as an outlet for those who have to govern men, had vividly touched my imagination. If the King had won the Ladies' Nominative, I thought, I would then have been justified in sending him a little miniature of Persian-make which I had brought back from a journey to Ispahan. It represented the game of polo of a young King of ancient Persia. He, too, the young Shah, had perhaps felt in listening to the report of his vizier this strong desire to hit the ball and perhaps of giving it somebody's name! What a pity, thought I, that the King should have lost his game, as it takes away any pretext I might have of presenting his Club with this little picture, which now seems to have more significance to me.

On my return to my Paris home, I decided to send the miniature to the Duke of San Pedro with the request that he should give it to the King with-

out telling him who sent it. I simply wish to think that this little picture should remain suspended on the wall of the Polo Club of Madrid as a votive offering of our childhood in the place where Don Alfonso, grown up, comes to play and amuse himself, finding here recreation and such necessary diversion from the dangers and burdens of his life as King. The Duke of San Pedro promises that he will deliver the picture to the King without revealing to him the source from which it comes, and in this way I excuse myself to the critical spirit.

A week after, a letter from Spain reached me in Rumania bearing the stamp which reminded me of the one Mademoiselle Viaud had once bought to please me during our disastrous visit to San Sebastian. It was the same profile, only fifteen years older. The handwriting on the envelope was that of Don Alfonso. Had the Duke of San Pedro betrayed my secret? The King said in his letter that he had not guessed at once who had sent him the Persian miniature, but that suddenly he had remembered my words when I had spoken of the game "*A qui perd gagne.*" He kindly added that under the circumstances he asked for no better fate than to have lost. He closed his letter expressing the wish that he and I should meet in France soon, in October, at the partridge shooting in Courance.

But it so happened, the day I received his letter

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

was the twenty-eighth of June, 1914, the very day that a bomb, one of those which Don Alfonso had said was more disagreeable to receive than a revolver shot, had struck down in a street in Serajevo the cousin of the King of Spain, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria. The consequences were that in the autumn of 1914, men and not partridges were shot down in the lovely plains and old forests of France.

When I arrived in Switzerland, on the thirty-first of May, 1917, accompanied by the sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, who had been helping me in my hospital during the enemy occupation of Bucharest, I found my mother waiting for me at Geneva. She had organized there, with the intelligent help of Monsieur Dollfus, a charity fund to provide for the most unhappy of the Rumanian prisoners, those who had been sent to the concentration camps of Bulgaria. My mother told me that it was thanks to the King of Spain and to his personal intervention that the food to keep our unhappy prisoners alive could be sent in sealed wagons from Switzerland through Austria and the Balkans to those far-away camps, where hunger and despair reigned.

My mother asked me to help her with her committee as long as I could not reach the Rumanian front, as I wished to do, now that the Russian revo-

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

lution had cut off communications. Then I was able to enter into details of my mother's work and soon found out that the organization existed only owing to the King of Spain's active exertions. A book ought to be written some day in which there would be enumerated all the similar rescue work done in Europe by Alfonso XIII's influence during this shipwreck of civilization that took place between 1914 and 1918. Simple statistics would certainly reveal innumerable good deeds of which very few people were aware, the benefactor having remained voluntarily in the background. The list would be long and varied. Placed between his English wife and his Austrian mother, the King of Spain was able to listen to the requests of the whole of the suffering world, and he never let a single prayer go unheard. When this book is written I shall ask for my part to be allowed to inscribe in it the names of those Rumanian soldiers, prisoners of the Bulgarians, whose lives were saved by the generous intervention of the King of Spain.

On the first of January, 1918, I was delegated by the Committee of Aid to Prisoners of War to write an official letter of thanks to Alfonso XIII for his great charity on behalf of our soldiers. I wrote this letter in impersonal terms and addressed it to one to whom such letters were then coming from every corner of the world. To my great surprise,

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

an answer from the King reached me some weeks later. In rereading this letter, it seems to me that his soul reveals itself in every one of its lines. It helped me to understand why this King had become, in the midst of the anguish of nations, among so many crimes and so many accumulated misfortunes, something like the umpire of conscience in Europe. He it was who had interceded unceasingly for all the wronged; he is always to be found on the side of the victims. His intervention ought to have saved Nurse Cavell had there been anything in this world which could have prevented Germany from committing such a crime. Other Kings and even other Queens had remained neutral during the great conflict, but how is it that it is ever the name of the King of Spain which is heard on the lips of those who ask for justice or for mercy? How did they know that he it was who would intervene most efficaciously? How did this belief arise in the hearts of so many suffering human beings? By what mystery? How did it happen? King Alfonso has chosen the better part, and it cannot be taken from him. He whose physical courage no one doubts, who has exposed his life so often, is better qualified than any one else to intercede for mercy, to try to lighten up by a ray of divine pity the abyss where so many human souls are agonizing. Placed by Providence at the crossing of the roads, the King of Spain has assumed the part of intermediary and

SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER  
mediator of Europe to ask from the belligerent  
powers pity and charity toward each other.

. . . . .  
Peace had been restored to a war-worn world  
for more than a year when, at the hotel in which  
I happened to be staying in London, the King and  
Queen of Spain arrived incognito, in the spring of  
1920. A great charity ball was to be given that  
evening at the hotel, and I received a short note  
from the King, saying he would see me at the ball.  
Unhappily, I am in mourning for my mother, and  
I cannot appear at a public function. Next morn-  
ing, while I am dressing, I hear my French maid  
answer the telephone in the next room. She, like  
most Frenchwomen, is indignant to find that in  
London people are obstinate enough to persist in  
speaking English over the telephone. But this time,  
instead of hearing her say to me as usual: "They  
don't know what they're talking about; nobody  
can understand what they're saying," I hear her  
distinctly lingering in the delights of a French con-  
versation.

"Yes, Monsieur le Duc," she says, "if Monsieur  
le Duc will be kind enough to wait a moment I  
will call Madame la Princesse. She will be here in  
an instant."

Intrigued, I wonder who this French Duke can  
be to whom Georgette Cordier, my maid, speaks

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

over the wire with so much amenity. She comes to the door, carrying the telephone.

"The Duke of Toledo, a French gentleman, speaking," she says with great satisfaction.

She was only a few centuries late with this descendant of Louis XIV! It was the King of Spain under his transparent incognito. The sunny accent of the south running through his voice brings back like a flood my old memories, those shared by the King, those of the month of May, 1914, at the polo match at Madrid, the Ladies' Nominative, the lost game, the exchanged letters, the peace-time and the war-time letters, and also those of my memories of which Don Alfonso is ignorant, my dear childhood remembrances, when the King of the Children was to make justice reign over a renewed world.

"I shall come and see you to-day if you will allow me," said the voice over the telephone.

On account of my mourning I could see Don Alfonso quite alone for the first time and have a long quiet conversation with him. Physically, he is very little changed. He has always the same boyish elegance, the free and easy air of a young Pyrenean. The face is the same, that inherited face which has been bequeathed to him by the centuries and that look in his eyes which is peculiarly his own.



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Is it yesterday we met for the first time, or seven years ago, or in the time of Isabellita?

If he has not changed, his country has changed, and for the better, he tells me. I must come and see for myself. The progress of Spain, the modern welfare of his people—this theme recurs many times in the course of his conversation.

I saw the Duke of Toledo twice more during his stay in London. I lunched with him, sitting by his side, at Mr. and Mrs. Asquith's house, and I saw him again several times when he did not see me. My windows opened on to Piccadilly and I could judge the way in which the Londoners share the irresistible feeling of sympathy that he inspires in all those who have once seen him. The crowd gathers in front of the hotel as soon as his car is in sight. People stand for hours outside the door in the hope of catching a glimpse of him. As soon as he is in sight, the cheerful English crowd bursts into loud hurrahs. When he goes out and when he comes in, I know it by the cheers that dominate for a moment the great dull roar of London traffic.

One day he must have missed his car, and he comes back to the hotel in a taxi. The people in the street have discovered him in this anonymous vehicle and surround him, cheering him heartily. He puts his head out of the window, takes off his hat, and says laughingly: "I see you have recog-

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

nized my ugly nose." This good-humored remark appears the following day in all the papers.

At Roehampton I watch his game of polo. When he comes back on foot toward the royal enclosure to greet the Queens, the Dowager Queen Alexandra, Queen Mary of England, and, sitting between them, the blond Queen of Spain, who appears to enjoy her husband's popularity in her English home, a crowd of enthusiastic spectators invade the lawn and acclaim him. He bows, smiles, looks pleased. I can remember a very old lady, who in the height of her enthusiasm turned toward me, whom she did not know, and said with great conviction: "He is such a darling, isn't he?"

Don Alfonso had said to me: "If you come back to Spain, you will find great changes since 1914."

But when shall I be able to go back there now that so many occupations keep me in Paris in the winter and in my own country in the summer, now that my life, wholly dominated by the critical spirit, leaves me very little leisure and no time at all for holidays? But circumstances arose which brought me back unexpectedly over my former tracks. Recently Spain happened to be twice on my way when I went to meet my husband in Africa, and I was able to judge for myself the great changes which the King spoke of so insistently. Spain's marvelous past is still untouched, but the roads

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

which lead to Granada, Seville, Toledo, and Burgos are to-day as excellent as the roads of England and will soon become as beautiful as the roads of France, because they have been recently planted with trees of different kinds. The prosperity of the country is evident to the naked eye. Most of the sterile mountains are now covered with vegetation and the forests devastated by the Moors replanted. The courses of the rivers have been regulated; new stations and factories have been built and the harbors enlarged. Exhibitions are now opening, one at Seville and another at Barcelona.

As I passed through Madrid, the Queen was kind enough to grant me an audience, in spite of the fact that the Court was in deep mourning. The King had lost his mother only two months ago. Doña Maria Christina of Austria, who had ruled sixteen years for her son and lived for him during the rest of her life, was carried recently to her grave in the Escorial, wearing the humble dress of a Franciscan nun in accordance with the ceremonial of the Most Christian of Monarchies. In the same little study where he had first spoken to me about Alarun, I was received by the King. Still very young in appearance, Don Alfonso is dressed in mourning. He has surmounted so many difficulties since he began his reign; he has avoided so many perils, survived so many tragical events that he now seems invulnerable, really above the vicissitudes common

## DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

to poor humanity. But the loss of his mother seems to have cast a shadow over the brilliance of his eyes. In her he has lost his most intimate friend, the mother who had been at the same time his mentor and his confidant, and to whom he could go for advice, as no King ever could, because besides being his mother, she was also his predecessor.

In the presence of the King I feel this time very near to the children of Biarritz. After the loss of our mother, we all feel small and weak, no matter at what age we lose her. During our talk it seems to me the King makes an effort to shake off his sadness, he speaks of his agricultural schemes. The title he is proud of having earned now is that of the First Farmer of Spain. He tells me of the old olive trees in the parc of Pardo that he had pruned. This had given them a new lease of life, making them blossom and put forth new shoots. The whole of Spain to-day resembles those beautiful old trees. Then he speaks of the Casa di Campo, his favorite spot: "I spent the great part of my childhood—First I lived there like a wild pony, because my mother wished me to become strong. I owe her not only life, but health, and it seems to me that I am her son twice over. I owe everything to her, more than any son to any mother. . . . I must be grateful to her memory for all her kindness, and also for all her severity. From my tenth birthday and up to my majority I had to learn terribly hard.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Fancy, I spent eleven hours a day at my studies, more perhaps than any other child. I had to combine the studies for both a military and a civil career because, being King, I had to know all that a boy knows who wants to become a lawyer and all a boy learns who is to become an artillery or a naval officer. It began every morning with gymnastics at six o'clock, then lessons and again lessons until midday. Only thirty minutes of recreation were allowed me. In the evening I dined at eight, and at nine I had half an hour's piano lesson. I hated that worse than anything. Mademoiselle Paula Czerny was my professor. I pity her still. She came after Señor de Castejon, military professor, after Señor Santa Maria de Parades, professor of political economy and administration, after Señor Arrilagal, professor of natural history, after Señor Ysalvatierra, professor of history, after Monsieur Goyan, professor of French, after Señor Merry del Val, professor of English. You can imagine how much patience was left to me when it was time for the piano lesson!"

Why does Don Alfonso tell me all these things, precisely on this spring Sunday morning, so beautiful that it seems to me curiously like a Sunday morning belonging to a former springtime? It is just because our lives are nothing but the result of a mysterious plan, of which we know but a small part of the design. Perhaps it is also because he

DON ALFONSO XIII, KING OF SPAIN

responds with unconscious sympathy to this immense belief and confidence we had placed in him at that time of candid innocence when God was still quite near to the newborn hearts of his creatures.

## CHAPTER II

### A FIRST IMPRESSION OF EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES

I AM a strong believer in first impressions. I also think that a second helping never adds anything to the flavor of a new dish, of a new fruit, of a new wine. I am also inclined to believe in the virtue of surprise in any sort of approach, be it that of a town, a monument, or a human being. There is a freshness, an acuity, a clearness, in an eye that sees unexpectedly, which no further knowledge can ever equal. That is why I dare write about my first impression of him who will one day be the ruler of the largest Empire that has ever been known since the days of Alexander and of Cæsar.

Apart from his exceptional position, I was long ago interested in the personality and character of the Prince of Wales owing to the friendship and admiration I had for a man who, though unknown to the public, has played a great part in the relationships between England and France before the War. This was the late Marquis de Breteuil. On him, and on him alone, King Edward VII bestowed by his will the greatest proof of friendship and confidence that could ever be given by a

## EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES

sovereign to a citizen of another country. The King of England confided to the Marquis de Breteuil the finishing touch in the education of his grandson, Prince Edward, who was to become heir presumptive to the throne.

Under the terms of his grandfather's will Prince Edward was to spend as a guest several months of each year in the house of the Marquis in the rue Rude, in Paris, and this for three successive years, beginning with the year 1913. The reasons why King Edward had chosen the Marquis de Breteuil among his many Parisian friends to act as host and also as worldly tutor to the future monarch were made quite comprehensible and clear to me by my personal feelings for the Marquis and the experience I had had of his delightful hospitality and marvelous worldly *savoir-vivre*.

A scholar and a lover of books in a city where there are many collectors of rare editions and many possessors of the secrets of books, a man of the world in a country which has produced for centuries many men of the world, a politician who although strongly gifted for politics kept aloof among many politicians, the Marquis was a rare combination of everything that a French gentleman should be: an intellectual as well as a sportsman, a nobleman as well as a good citizen.

French society, since there has been a republic in France, has lived greatly divided. The people



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

who enjoy birth and tradition, beautiful old houses and inherited charm of manners, have got into the habit of keeping themselves to themselves. Since the days of the great Revolution, they have ceased to be the generous hosts of play-writers, poets, novelists, and philosophers, as their ancestors had been in olden times. They have lost by this in many ways, intelligence being just as much affected by contact with good minds as silver can be brightened by contact with soft kid. In their turn the intellectuals have lost by this neglect. They have missed many opportunities of improving their manners and sometimes even their means of livelihood. State affairs having entirely passed into the hands of the *bourgeoisie*, it is seldom that a member of the old aristocracy has any opportunity of knowing what is going on in the government of his own country. Prejudice helps to keep apart those three factors of social life, and it is easier for a foreigner in Paris to dine with a duke or a marquis, to lunch with a deputy or a secretary of state, and to have tea with a great writer, than it is for a Frenchman belonging to one of those three categories to meet the representative men of the two others.

Of the prejudice which keeps nobility, power, and wit divided, the Marquis de Breteuil was amazingly free.

King Edward remembered that he had met at the table of the Marquis no less a person than Léon

Gambetta, then the ruler of republican France. A luncheon party in the Hôtel de Breteuil was generally composed of the cleverest as well as of the most elegant and wealthy. There beauty met power, birth recognized genius, and wit and charm animated conversation alternately. The great men of the Republic enjoyed the more subtle atmosphere of what is called the "Ancien Régime." For more than thirty years the Marquis de Breteuil had held a sort of balance of powers in Paris society.

I remember my first impression of a luncheon in this wonderful house called the Hôtel de Breteuil. The party consisted of Mr. Winston Churchill, then British Minister for War, and of M. Briand, then Prime Minister of the Republic. I still see in my mind's eye the two statesmen happily talking together after lunch, on a low sofa, dominated by the stately portrait of King Louis XVI in his coronation robes. This picture was a gift of the King of France to the Baron de Breteuil, His Majesty's last Ambassador in Constantinople.

King Edward had been well inspired when he thought that his grandson would easily learn in the Marquis de Breteuil's house and company all that was worth knowing of Parisian life. Edward VII had worked hard for the Entente Cordiale, and he justly thought that nothing could help more to make France understood and appreciated by the Prince of Wales than to live for some time in the

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

house of his old friend, the Marquis de Breteuil. Only one year had the Prince enjoyed this hospitality when the War broke out.

I came with my husband to Paris at the end of the year 1914, and we had the privilege of dining once more, and for the last time, with the Marquis de Breteuil.

The Prince of Wales was then in Flanders with the troops. The conversation was all about the War. The Marquis de Breteuil's hopes for France's victory were based on the remembrance of King Edward's policy, which he had well seconded in days past. Unfortunately, he died before the United States joined the Allies, before the happy end.

When going to England in 1921, I was asked to meet the Prince of Wales in the house of one of my friends near Folkestone. I had never seen him before and I was not to see him then. The Japanese Crown Prince, Hirohito, was landing in England that same day, and the Prince had therefore been prevented from joining our party.

But according to my belief in the superiority of unexpected meetings, it was perhaps better that I should not have seen the Prince this time. In spite of the fact that I go to England every year for a short pleasure trip, seeking what I call my annual "sip of England," it so happened that there was no

## EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES

opportunity for me to see the Prince either in the year 1922 or 1923.

He was traveling a great deal, and I never stayed in London without hearing that he was in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, or some other remote dominion.

In December, 1924, he was in France when I came back to Paris for the winter, but he had just left the Embassy the day before, after a great dinner party and a brilliant ball that Lord and Lady Crewe had given in his honor. Every one spoke of this ball, and Paris society, as watched by a newcomer, looked like an agitated lake over which the spring winds had just passed.

The Crewe ball was the topic of every conversation. The Prince of Wales had danced with this lady, and then with that other. Their dresses were described. The Prince's *habit noir* was dark blue; he wore a dark red carnation in his buttonhole; he had it changed twice. Everybody was enchanted with him, and every one wished he would come back. He was now hunting somewhere in Normandy. A privileged few had been asked with him there.

Listening to the rumor of Paris salons, I was well aware that the one-time guest of the Marquis de Breteuil had fully succeeded in becoming the great favorite in Parisian circles.

Soon after my arrival in Paris, I was unex-

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

pectedly urged to go to London by my cousins Antoine and Elizabeth Bibesco, who were soon to leave for Washington and who had asked me to spend a few days with them at the Wharf, the Asquith place near Oxford.

I enjoyed a most pleasant week-end there with Mr. and Mrs. Asquith and their children, in the company of their many amusing and famous friends.

Before I had left London for the country, I had received and accepted an invitation from one of my oldest friends, Sir Philip Sassoon, to dine at his house in London and go to a play after dinner. No further information was given as to whom I should meet. I only knew the party would be very small.

We came back from the country motoring, I being driven home by Mr. Asquith. Elizabeth Bibesco had promised to lend me her car to take me to dinner, but her motor had a breakdown on the way to London from the Wharf, and I heard of it when my maid had already pointed out to me how late it was. I had been invited for a quarter to nine, and it was now 8:45. A taxi was hurriedly summoned to the house, but unfortunately it took some time to get one. We were then living in Hyde Park Terrace.

When I left the house to my great surprise a thick black fog was covering the trees and the streets.

## EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES

This was quite unexpected, as the weather had been very fine all day and the stars had been shining after sunset.

I had heard the footman give the address to the taxi driver: 25 Park Lane. But after some time of slow driving in the fog, I suddenly realized by the many turns the car took that the man didn't know where he was going. I opened the door of the taxi and shouted, "Are we in Park Lane?"

"Yes, m'm," the man answered, "but there is no 25."

"There is a 25," I said firmly. I had been staying there only the year before; the number couldn't possibly have been changed since. "Stop and ask a policeman," I said, seeing that we were still wandering in the darkness of the night.

The physical sensation of time flying had now become a pain in my head. At last a policeman was found, with as much difficulty as a needle in a haystack.

"We are looking for the house of Sir Philip Sassoon," I said, thinking a policeman would be sure to know where an M.P. lived. But this man did not seem to have studied "Who's Who". "Sir Philip Sassoon?" . . . he did not know.

I was beginning to feel absurdly angry with myself and everybody else.

"Sir Philip Sassoon is very well known," was on my lips. Then I felt the uselessness of discussing

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

the matter, and thereby breathing in more of the black fog that made me cough.

"Go to 23 or 27," I said. "Ring the bell and ask for 25."

Again we drove and then stopped in the darkness. I heard the man jump down on the pavement and go up some steps. A minute, five minutes, a century, no one seemed to answer his ring; probably the people inside the house were at dinner and the servants could not come quickly to the door. Five more minutes; nothing seemed to move. I felt like crying. I imagined the owners of number 23 or 27 were now traveling in India. The house must be uninhabited.

In my mind's eye, and nowhere else, I could see a clock; in my mind's ear, and nowhere else, I could hear a clock striking nine and perhaps even half past nine!

At last a dim light pierced the fog. In the open door a shadow stood which looked like the ghost of a housemaid. Then the ghost of my chauffeur touched his cap. He came back; he grumbled something through the window about the house being somewhere round a corner; again I had the detestable feeling of turning quickly round in the darkness like a spinning top.

At length we stopped in front of what must be the much sought house! The horrible feeling of being late for dinner had brought back to my mind

the remonstrances of the old Duke de Rohan, who once in a similar circumstance had told me: "If you want to be happy in French society never again must you be late for dinner."

Hurriedly mounting the steps which led to the front door, I was wondering how many people I had kept waiting and who inside the house was hating me now.

What was for me the magic door opened wide at the first sound of the bell, giving me the sensation that I had been awaited close behind the door all this time.

A flood of light, and behind the footman who had opened the door stood my host himself. "We thought you lost in London and I have just been telephoning to your maid," said he gayly.

This was enough to make me understand how late I was, and muttering a thousand excuses, I hurriedly left my cloak in his hands.

Dazzled by the lights, I passed through the beautiful sitting-rooms and perceived at a distance in the light of the last room two people, a lady and a gentleman, who were getting up to meet me.

Thank God! I thought to myself, I have kept *only two* guests waiting for dinner. It might have been worse if the party had been larger.

Coming nearer to the lady, at the distance at which my shortsightedness allows me to recognize my contemporaries, I discovered the kindly wel-



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

coming face was that of a cousin of Sir Philip's whom I already knew well. She would forgive my unpunctuality. As for the gentleman. . . . As we walked toward each other, I suddenly recognized who he was in spite of the fact that I had never seen him before. Well, it was the Prince of Wales!

There was no possibility of mistake, and his face was to me as familiar as St. Peter's or the Arc de Triomphe is to travelers who have never yet been to Rome or to Paris.

All my sense of politeness, social obligations, all the respect for State institutions with which I had been brought up made me feel instantly my unpardonable lack of promptness, and I would have lost my poise if the Prince had not displayed then all that a refined education could add to natural charm and grace.

My sense of guilt vanished under a few kindly words; my emotion was calmed by a smile.

I was offered a glass of something to drink which made me feel before I touched it that I had already recovered.

Everything in the manners of the Prince corresponded so exactly to what it should have been to prevent my feeling miserable that there was soon nothing left for me but to feel happy.

We proceeded to dinner, and then the Prince again had a lovely inspiration. He spoke with our host of the play we were going to see. It was but

## EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES

a musical comedy, something light and amusing with not much plot in it, so it did not matter at what hour we reached the theater. This was again a comfort to me.

I told the Prince how everybody in Paris had been talking of the beautiful ball given for him at the Embassy, and how everybody had enjoyed his presence, and how I had left France under the impression that he was still there hunting in Normandy.

This caused the Prince to speak of several recollections he had of his first stays in Paris as a very young boy.

He mentioned the names of several people with whom he supposed I was also acquainted.

He spoke of his first luncheon party in Paris and how the lovely Comtesse Greffuhle had kept everybody waiting for more than an hour, and then how she appeared carrying in her hand a pink carnation which she gave him in sign of contrition, and on her face a smile which made every one forget her unpunctuality.

And then we spoke of the Marquis de Breteuil, his charm, his understanding, his ravishing hospitality.

After that the conversation shifted to the Prince's long journeys—New Zealand, Australia, Canada; nothing banal was said and still the talk went on.

My love of architecture was fully gratified by

his appreciation of the Châteaux de la Loire, and I was also delighted to hear him say of the beauty of Hampton Court all that I thought myself, preferring it to Buckingham Palace on æsthetic lines.

The dinner was over before I realized that time had passed.

The clock struck half-past ten when we left for the theater.

I had seen the Prince in a private house; now I was going to have a first impression of him in public.

When we entered the theater the corridors were empty and nobody watched our arrival except the director, who showed our party to the box. The play was going on and the Prince of Wales took his seat quietly behind the ladies, in the dim light of the box.

The public did not realize that their future king had entered the room. One more fair-haired boy was watching the play; one more pair of hands clapped when the curtain fell.

By the time the second act began a rumor came from the seats near our box: "The Prince, the Prince. . . ."

As the musical comedy went on, one of the actors made an improvisation alluding to the Prince's smartness in clothes. The Prince laughed heartily, but where my sympathy and admiration for him reached their highest point was at the moment

## EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES

when, to the sounds of "God Save the King," he left the box and I found myself beside him in the thickest of the crowd at the door of the theater.

As he appeared, the crowd divided without the help of any policemen, leaving the Prince a clear space to walk to his car. On each side stood groups of girls, some poor, some rich, all in their best evening clothes, and suddenly as the Prince advanced, a mad cheer broke out. For one moment he stopped and remained perfectly still, his fair head bent in acknowledgment. The good-looking boy, with the dark red carnation in his buttonhole, dressed just like any other smart young man on the spot, looked suddenly so grave, so serious, so deeply moved by the love aroused.

I thought there was something cheerful and at the same time something pathetic in the recognition of their future King by his future subjects. An heir to the throne always wears the invisible crown of hope; he is the King of the Future. His reign is not on earth but in heaven. He rules over the time to be, to which all men and women direct their thoughts and wishes; he is the embodiment of great expectations.

The sensitive attitude of the Prince in the circumstances made a very deep impression on me. I had seen other Crown Princes, in other countries, greeted and cheered. Never had I seen any of them receive the spontaneous homage of the people with

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

such reticent gentleness, with such graceful appreciation. With his bare head, his boyish face, he looked as respectful, as consecrated, as a young knight receiving the sacrament.

In one single evening I had had the privilege of an unexpected meeting, which allowed me to see the Prince of Wales, both in private life and on facing the crowd. Observant by taste and nature, I had watched him well. In his worldly behavior he was doing credit to his grandfather, King Edward, and the old Marquis de Breteuil would have taken discreet pride in the charming gentleness with which he reassured a most unhappy stranger who had unwillingly kept him waiting for his dinner.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NEMESSES: EMPRESS MARIA-FEODOROWNA AND HER TWO SISTERS

SHE who was called during sixty-two years the Empress Maria-Feodorowna, the wife of the last autocratic Emperor of Russia, the last absolute monarch in Europe, whose Empire extended over part of Asia, the widow of the Czar Alexander III, the mother of Nicholas II, who lost in the Revolution the crown of the Romanoffs, was laid in her tomb on the eighteenth of October, 1928, in the crypt of her ancestors at Roskilde, in Danish territory, accompanied by the liturgical chants of the Russian Church. Her body, reduced by age, was now as light as that of a young girl, and it would seem that, in order to pass into the realm of shadows, the Empress Maria-Feodorowna had become what she had been long ago before she married, a daughter of Denmark, little Princess Dagmar.

At the news of her death, which made so little sensation in the Europe of overthrown dynasties, an extraordinary and romantic memory crossed my mind and I immediately experienced the wish to write down the strange story which had been re-

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

lated to me by one sovereign about this other one and the peculiar experiences I had had in connection with Maria-Feodorowna.

King Carol of Rumania had just died, worn out by a long illness and broken-hearted by the resistance with which his Ministers opposed his wish to make Rumania join the side of Germany. It was in the first months of the Great War.

I went to pay my visit of condolence to his widow, Queen Elizabeth (in literature Carmen Sylva) at the beginning of the year 1915.

It was the first time I had the occasion to see the Queen alone *en tête-à-tête* since so many great and terrible events had taken place in Europe.

I was uneasy about the difference of opinion in regard to the War which I felt existed between Carmen Sylva and ourselves. How would she judge the origin of the great conflict? What would she say to me on this burning subject? She was the German Queen of our Latin country; she knew of my sympathies for France, my winters spent in Paris in literary circles of which she appreciated the value, having been herself in correspondence with Pierre Loti and with several other well-known French writers. She could have no doubt as to my feelings, and although I was then very young and she had the right to attach little importance to the political opinions which I professed, she could

## THE NEMESSES

not ignore the action of my family. My father, the King's Minister, had undertaken on behalf of the Conservative Party (of which he was one of the most esteemed leaders) a very serious campaign in favor of Rumania entering the War with France, England, and Russia as allies.

For my part, I knew how hard King Carol had struggled before his death to make his party triumph and ally Rumania with the Central Powers, attached as he was to the German cause by all the traditions of the House of Hohenzollern to which he belonged. But Queen Carmen Sylva, born at Neu-Wied on the banks of the Rhine, and belonging to one of those princely families of Southern Germany in which the philosophical traditions of the eighteenth century were kept up, permeated with classical culture, revealed herself to me in a very different light. The exalted view with which she looked upon the war surprised me, and I was to learn from her to judge the conflict from quite a different angle. Carmen Sylva was to give me, on the origin of the great struggle, an opinion of extreme originality, and to reveal to me the secret of what she believed to be the true hidden springs of the drama.

She began by speaking of the last moments of King Carol, which were overshadowed by this terrible war.

Then she talked for some time of the influence



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

that this general massacre of nations might have over the occult sciences in which Carmen Sylva had been all her life a convinced adept.

"Think," said she, "of all the mothers who have lost their sons, of all the women who have lost the man they loved! It is certain that communication with the other world must make immense progress now. So many people will want to speak with their dead!"

These words did not find in me the echo that the Queen expected. Perhaps my strictly religious education had rendered me indifferent to all the manifestations of spiritualism as practiced in drawing-rooms, and I also knew from my parents that at one time Queen Carmen Sylva had been cruelly deceived by unscrupulous people who had pretended to reincarnate the soul of her only child, the little Princess Maria, whose death at a very early age had been a great grief to her.

But leaving the uncertain ground of occultism the Queen returned to historical reality. "I believe in Fate," she said, "as did the Greek tragedians, the masters of Goethe and of Nietzsche, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides. I believe in the reversion of faults, and that a crime, an injustice, always ends by punishment and by engendering other crimes and other acts of injustice. And no one can escape this law!

"At the origin of this appalling War (which we

## THE NEMESSES

now see) there is the sin of Prussia, the old sin which you are too young to know about; there is the war of the Duchies! To avenge this sin God chose three daughters of a king, three young princesses who used to dance round the mulberry bush in their father's garden, as in the old songs and fairy stories. One was called Alexandra, another Dagmar, and the third Thyra. These are the Nemeses. They were young and spirited; they loved their country, Denmark; they loved good King Christian, their father.

"Now, it happened that, on account of the cupidity of Prussia, an unjust war broke out which wrested the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark and annexed them by force to the crown of Prussia. Likewise, the Duchy of Hanover was taken away from the family of Cumberland and confiscated by the House of Prussia. That was the first, second and third sin. But Destiny was watching. The three princesses were growing up; they had been educated to detest dishonesty, and for them Prussia was a thief and an assassin.

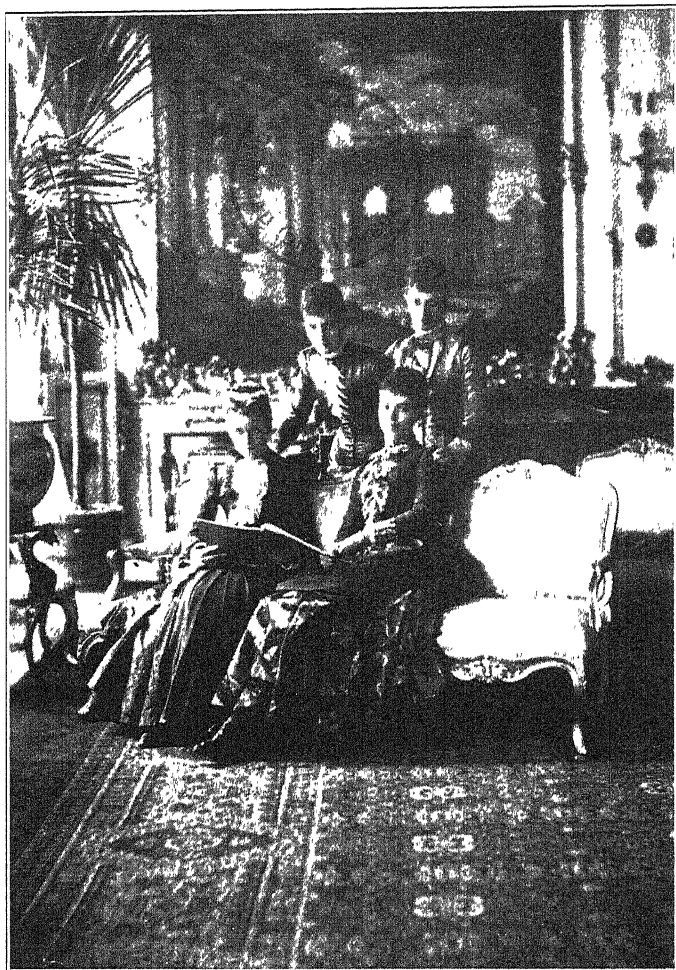
"Now, let us follow them on the path traced for them by Providence. The crown of England came to the most beautiful of them, the charming Alexandra, who became the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII and mother of George V. The heavy crown of Russia fell to the lot of little Dagmar, the sec-

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

ond, and the merriest. She became the wife of the Czar Alexander III, and mother of the Czar Nicholas II. For the gentle Thyra, who was as good as an angel, destiny had reserved the title of Duchess of Cumberland: she entered the family from which Prussia had stolen the Duchy of Hanover. Now do you understand why I call them the Nemeses? Like the Graces, they were three who knew how to make themselves beloved; like the Fates, they were three who spun between them the future of Europe. Their curses hang over the destiny of a conquering and unjust Prussia, which will end by bringing disaster on my poor Germany!"

Thus spoke Carmen Sylva, and I listened to her in silence, very much impressed by the prophetic turn her conversation had taken. I pictured to myself the three little Danish princesses, their hair floating in the wind on the terrace of Elsinore, Hamlet's terrace, and vowing, as he did, to avenge their father. I imagined them afterwards leaving in turn the shores of their beloved Denmark, one to wear in London on her graceful head the three ostrich plumes of the Princesses of Wales, the other to receive at Moscow the diadem of the Empresses of Russia; the third, finally, to perpetuate in her exile at Gmunden the household tradition of the Cumberlands, the reprobation of Prussia.

Carmen Sylva demonstrated how iniquity had



*Photograph by Elfelt*

THE THREE PRINCESSES OF DENMARK WITH THEIR  
MOTHER, QUEEN LOUISE—QUEEN ALEXANDRA,  
EMPERESS MARIA-FEODOROWNA OF RUSSIA,  
AND THE DUCHESS OF CUMBERLAND

## THE NEMESSES

borne its fruit. Every year the Danish Princesses returned to Copenhagen to visit their father, accompanied by their husbands. In his old age King Christian IX, surnamed the father-in-law of Europe, could rely upon his sons-in-law, the all-powerful Emperor of Russia, and the future King of England.

At St. Petersburg (where Carmen Sylva lived in her youth at the house of her aunt, the Grand Duchess Helen, during the years which preceded her marriage with the reigning Prince of Rumania), she could see how Princess Dagmar, under her new name of Maria-Feodorowna (which she had taken at her indispensable conversion to the Russian Church) propagated antipathy to Prussia and strove against the German influence at the court of Russia.

"Do you see, my child," said Carmen Sylva, and her eyes shone as with a mystic inspiration behind her big spectacles, "do you see, the ancient Greeks are our masters! They knew better than we do about the hidden springs of human actions. Their myths contain an eternal truth which will not perish. . . . When I saw that Germany was fighting on two frontiers and that she had as enemies not only the mutilated France of 1870 and her ally, Russia, but also the British Empire, I thought of the Nemeses, those avenging deities of forgotten crimes.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

"On the declaration of War in August, 1914, the sons of two of the Danish sisters, Alexandra and Dagmar, and grandsons of the dispossessed King Christian, George V and Nicholas II, were seated on the English and Russian thrones. They bore such a curious resemblance to each other that they might have been taken for twin brothers. It is true that, to appease the gods, the King of Prussia, William II, Emperor of Germany, had given his only daughter, Princess Victoria, in marriage to the son of the third sister, Thyra, the Duchess of Cumberland, a short time before the War, but that did not suffice to avert the anger of the gods. You cannot avert the consequences of ancient errors! The sages of old were imbued with this truth, and the reversion of wrongs is also at the base of the Christian religion.

"The Bible at every page confirms me in my conviction that Germany has been drawn into the abyss by the sin of Prussia."

These prophetic words became fixed in my mind all the more deeply because they were the last words I was to hear spoken by Queen Carmen Sylva. A few days later I left Rumania. I started again for Paris with my husband, who was sent on a mission to the French Government with a view to obtaining the necessary aëroplanes for the Rumanian Army.

Queen Carmen Sylva died of pneumonia only a

## THE NEMESSES

few months before Rumania entered the War on the side of the Allies, and so was spared the great grief of seeing her native country and that of her adoption fighting against each other.

During our journey to Paris my mind continually reverted to Carmen Sylva's narration, and I often thought of the three Danish princesses she had called the Nemeses. Among my childish remembrances I possessed at least one image of the Empress Maria-Feodorowna, and it was she therefore of the three sisters whom I could picture to myself most easily.

In the boudoir of Queen Nathalie of Serbia (one of my mother's relatives, with whom we sometimes stayed in my childhood at Biarritz), I had often seen a large photograph signed with a flourish and framed in a splendid Russian frame, representing the whole Imperial family of Russia. Being a child, I was interested in the large group of children. The Empress, small and slender, leaning on the arm of the Emperor Alexander, a giant, was in the center of the picture; beside them, the Czarevitch, the future Nicholas II, their son, sixteen years old, in the uniform of a Cossack. Sitting on the ground at their parents' feet, the Grand Duke George, the Grand Duke Michael, dressed in sailor suits, the Grand Duchesses Xenia and Olga in white dresses, their hair falling over their shoulders, after the

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

fashion of little girls at that time. This family group, which I often had an opportunity of contemplating, inspired me with sympathy. I thought they had kind faces. But an event was soon to change the excellent sentiments I entertained toward the Czar and his family.

Queen Nathalie of Serbia was very Russian in her opinions, and entirely devoted to the policy of the Czar in the Balkans, and this was the origin of her quarrel with King Milan, her husband, and the secret reason of her exile. It happened that while we were staying at Biarritz with her, the Emperor Alexander III died at Yalta. When the news of his death reached Biarritz, Queen Nathalie was terribly distressed. She went into mourning, and to manifest her deep feeling, she attended all the funeral services of the Russian Church in memory of the late Emperor, taking us with her. This, I am ashamed to say, brought about the change in my feelings toward the Emperor's family. These ceremonies were interminable and repeated at short intervals. They began by a long service which took place on the third day after the passing away of the Czar, and continued, with great pomp, on the day corresponding to that on which he was buried in state at St. Petersburg. They began again nine days after his death.

I felt that I no longer liked the Empress Maria-Feodorowna or her children, whose names I heard



## THE NEMESSES

too often repeated by the Russian priests in their prayer, and that the memory of the late Alexander III was becoming indifferent to me. I was not quite seven years old, and to stand good and quiet while the priests chanted these interminable rites was for me too great a trial. Queen Nathalie stood in the first row and my sister and I with her. The eyes of the whole congregation, consisting of the numerous Russian colony at Biarritz, were directed toward us. I was obliged to behave well, but was bored to tears.

During this time, which was rendered unhappy to me by the remembrances of these mournful masses, I cannot call to mind all Queen Nathalie told my sister and me about the court of Russia. Awakened, however, by the conversation I had just had with Carmen Sylva, I remembered having been told by Queen Nathalie of the yearly visits which the Emperor Alexander III, with the Empress, used to pay to his father-in-law at Copenhagen. He was worshiped for his good humor and celebrated for his great muscular strength. To amuse his family assembled on the terrace after lunch, he used to lift up with outstretched arms not only his wife, who was small and light, but also his sisters-in-law, the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of Cumberland, who were taller.

After what Carmen Sylva had told me in 1915, I puzzled my brains to recover the elements which

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

would enable me to confirm something of the first conception I had formed of Maria-Feodorowna in the far-off times when Queen Nathalie of Serbia spoke to us about her. I remembered the incident of a bouquet of roses offered to the Empress at the time of her solemn entrance into a Russian town by the side of Alexander III, when they were a young married couple. The thorns had been carelessly left on the roses which formed this bouquet; consequently, the Empress pricked her fingers. Seeing this, the Czar seized the silver salver on which the mayor of the town had just presented him bread and salt, and with his powerful hands, twisted it into a cornet, into which he stuck the bouquet of roses, and in this way offered them to the Empress.

From this it was presaged that Maria-Feodorowna would be spared the thorns of life by the solicitude of her husband.

One of the most curious happenings was soon to revive my historical interest in the Nemeses, surrounding in my imagination the daughters of King Christian with a mysterious and supernatural atmosphere.

When I arrived in Paris in 1915, one of the first persons I saw was Mr. Iswolsky, formerly Chancellor of the Russian Empire, and then Ambassador to France. My parents had been intimate with him in their youth, and he was very kind to me. A few months before, on the eve of the Great War, in

## THE NEMESSES

May, 1914, I had traveled for the first time in Spain with a French friend, the Marquise de Ganay. While we were planning our journey, Ambassador Iswolsky took much interest in it. He gave me a thousand directions about the museums and monuments we were to visit, and never ceased telling me how much he would like to be able to return to Seville, Toledo, and especially Granada, which he had seen in his youth. He repeated so often to me how much he envied me the happiness of visiting Spain, and seeing it in springtime, that at last I said to him:

"Well, since you have such a desire to go there, why don't you arrange to start with us?"

"What do you think about the political situation in Europe?" he asked. "It is so bad just now that I cannot even dream of leaving my post. If, however, there should be an improvement and you and Madame de Ganay still wished me to be your guide to the Alhambra and the Prado Museum, send me a telegram and I will join you at once."

He added:

"But once on the way to Spain, you will be so enchanted with all you see that you will think no more of an old weary friend like me. Andalusia is the most beautiful country in the world in May, and oh, what a joy to see it when one is twenty, like you!"

But there was no improvement in the political

situation. On the contrary, it continued to grow worse. The Russian Ambassador to France could not leave his post. He had to remain there until, three years later, the fatal hour of the Russian Revolution struck.

When I returned to Paris in February, 1915, I found Iswolsky very anxious about the War, very much changed, and apparently greatly affected by the publicity campaign then being waged against him. Confident of my friendship, he spoke to me openly about it.

In the first dark days of the War, after the defeats of Mons and Charleroi, when the French Government had taken refuge in Bordeaux, the newspapers had accused the Russian Ambassador of having said, boasting of it:

"This is *my* war!"

Iswolsky denied having pronounced these absurd and portentous words, formerly attributed to the Empress Eugénie when the unhappy War of 1870 broke out. He explained to me the real words of which this ready-made phrase was the spiteful interpretation. What he really said was this: during the last four years when he had been the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, he had acquired, by means of information coming from Germany, the terrible conviction that Europe was heading straight for war. In consequence, he had used all his efforts to bring about peace as rapidly as possible between

## THE NEMESSES

his country and Japan and end a war which, he said, was only after all a colonial expedition, and, above all, he had tried, hoped, wished for Russia, a political *rapprochement* with Great Britain. The English alliance, yes, that was his work, and he resolutely laid claim to it. Who had helped him in his difficult task? Nobody! The court and nobility of St. Petersburg were in entire sympathy with Germany. Who had understood him? No one, *unless perhaps the Empress Dowager Maria-Feodorowna, mother of the Czar. . . .*

"Now I come to think of it," said he, "I must tell you about a strange thing which happened to me last spring and in which you and the Marquise de Ganay are indirectly concerned. Do you remember the longing I had to start with you for Spain last May?"

"I remember perfectly."

"Well, a short time after your departure, my curiosity with regard to the occult sciences, added to the anxiety in which I lived as far as the political situation was concerned, induced me on a friend's recommendation to go to a fortune teller, Madame D——, who has now a reputation all over Paris. Scarcely was this woman hypnotized than she said to me:

"'You will receive a telegram. A lady will send for you and you will undertake a journey to meet her again.'

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

"‘Alas,’ thought I, ‘I am neither of an age nor am I in a position for a lady to invite me to travel.’

"‘Yes, yes,’ continued the fortune teller, ‘she is a lady to whom you can refuse nothing. *One* has telegraphed to you, but two are waiting for you.’

"‘Two ladies,’ thought I, and immediately the remembrance of you and the Marquise de Ganay crossed my mind. Perhaps you had sent me a wire by way of a joke from Granada renewing your invitation as you knew how much I envied you your journey to Spain.

"The fortune teller, still sound asleep, continued:

"‘You will do what she asks. You will go on a ship, but a queer ship which does not sail. The two ladies are waiting for you. You are with them on deck. . . . They are speaking to you. . . . You are leaning on the rail and the two ladies are near you. All three of you are looking at a town before you. . . . They are telling you something important. . . .’

"I returned home," said Iswolsky, "convinced that this prophetess was no good and that she had only told me silly improbable things. As I had told to you just when you were about to start, I was tied to my Embassy on account of the political situation, which I considered was becoming more and more dangerous. If I did not go with you, in spite of my wish to see Spain again, I should certainly not go with any one. The social obligation"

of the month of May in Paris filled every day in my calendar. The visit of King George of England, which was announced for the end of the month, also necessitated my presence. There was to be a review at Vincennes, *fêtes* at the Elysée and at the English Embassy which I must attend. I forgot all about the fortune teller and returned to my absorbing occupations, my prearranged receptions, to the life of laborious pleasure of an Ambassador in Paris during the season.

"Toward the end of the last week in May, I received a telegram from the Empress Maria-Feodorowna inviting me to lunch with her on board the English royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, lying off Cherbourg, where she was with her sister Queen Alexandra. In order to comply with the gracious invitation of the Empress, I immediately postponed a series of previous engagements and took the train for Cherbourg on the day chosen by the two sovereigns. In the midst of my social cares and political preoccupations I had completely forgotten the fortune teller. It was only after lunch, when the Empress and Queen Alexandra withdrew with me from their suite on the deck of the yacht, and I was standing with them, one on each side, leaning against the rigging, that the memory of the prophecy struck my brain like a flash. I was on the deck of a ship that was not sailing, looking at a town and talking with two ladies, one of whom

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

had sent for me, a lady to whom I could refuse nothing. . . .”

The account of this secret meeting on the eve of the War, predicted by a fortune teller, which included the mother of the King of England and the mother of the Czar, with Iswolsky, one of the statesmen who had the largest share in the alliance of Russia and England, made a kind of epilogue to the mystical vision of Carmen Sylva.

I was presented to Queen Alexandra after the victory of the Allies, in May, 1919, when she was a witness at the marriage of my cousin, Antoine Bibesco, with Elizabeth Asquith, and signed the register at St. Margaret's church.

The Treaty of Peace had just been signed at Versailles. When the newspapers published the conditions I saw with amazement that Schleswig-Holstein had been given back to Denmark. This was the only privileged country which received territories formerly wrested from them by Prussia, *without having shed a drop of blood for the restoration*. We may say that Denmark's victory alone was free of blood, so to speak, exempt from death duties. Beneath the ruins of the Prussian throne, Hanover rose to liberty. In the crypt of Roskilde, where the Danish sovereigns have been buried for fifteen centuries, the spirit of King Christian IX, the father-in-law of Europe, had been appeased!



## THE NEMESSES

Such was the extraordinary conclusion that Destiny gave to the prophecies of *Carimen Sylva*.

When I made my curtsy to the eldest of the Nemeses, Queen Alexandra, I saw that she still resembled her numerous portraits. Her beautiful face seemed in a way embalmed by the admiration called forth during so many years. She spoke in a small shrill voice, the effect of which she could not realize, for she was deaf. She pointed out in the show case for jewels the ornament she herself had offered Elizabeth Asquith, the daughter of the man who had been Prime Minister during the reigns of Edward VII and George V. It was he who governed England when the British Empire declared war against Wilhelm II, thought I. . . .

"This is my little contribution," said she with a pleasant smile, showing me the brooch with her monogram.

As I looked at Queen Alexandra's face, I could not help murmuring to myself the verses of a poem written at the time of her marriage which I had once learned from my old English governess:

"Sea King's daughter from over the sea,  
Alexandra.

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,  
Alexandra. . . ."

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

A year later I returned to London for the christening of Priscilla Bibesco, the daughter of Antoine and Elizabeth. Queen Alexandra was her godmother. As she had been suffering from gripe and was unable to go out, she was represented at the christening of the child by the Duchess of Portland, and the baby was afterwards taken in its christening robe to Marlborough House.

The Dowager Empress of Russia, miraculously escaped from the Bolsheviks, had for some time past been living with her sister in London. To the astonishment of every one, Maria-Feodorowna did not wear mourning for her son Nicholas. The merciful gods had inspired her with the consoling conviction that the Czar was not dead. He, his wife, and children continued to live in the obstinate heart and imagination of his mother. She knew nothing, or believed nothing, about the cruel drama which had taken place in the cellar of the house of Ipatieff.

One day, the Empress Maria-Feodorowna was driving through the streets of London, modestly dressed, like some little old lady going to warm herself in Hyde Park in the rays of the May sun. I happened to meet her on the way, and as she passed by I bowed deeply to her.

Thanks to the revelations of Carmen Sylva, I revered in Maria-Feodorowna one incarnation of the goddess who punishes injustice.

## CHAPTER IV

### OUR VISIT TO THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

MY memories of our visit to the Czar of the Valley of Roses have been recently stirred by reading in the newspapers two announcements of very unequal importance, the destruction by earthquake of the Bulgarian town of Philippopolis and the journey to South America of the ex-King Ferdinand of Bulgaria.

In 1911 we decided to make an automobile tour in the Balkan Peninsula, whimsically, for no other reason than our wish to visit, with the French friends then staying with us in Rumania, the neighboring country on the Danube—Tirnovu, Philippopolis, Sofia, and, above all, Kazanlik, the Valley of Roses.

The party consisted of Princess Eugène Murat, of her cousin, Princess Lucien Murat, daughter of the Duke de Rohan, our cousin, Emmanuel Bibesco, brother of Antoine Bibesco, former minister of Rumania in Washington, Prince Léon Ghika, a friend, Lieutenant Cantemir, my husband and myself.

We were traveling not as royal guests, but as

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

tourists, fond of open air, long drives, wild scenery, ready to face bad roads and the somewhat insufficient accommodation of the Near East hotels. Nothing was further from our minds or intentions than to call on the King of Bulgaria, whom none of us knew personally.

We had heard of his recent marriage to his second wife, Princess Eleanor of Reuss; we knew he was a great political schemer and an ambitious man; we also knew that three years previously he had fulfilled the aim of his life in proclaiming himself Czar of the Bulgarians—he who was not yet even recognized as Prince of Bulgaria by most of the powers in Europe. The English papers at the time nicknamed him the Lesser Czar.

The *Almanach de Gotha*, the Bible of sovereign rights and precedence, had mentioned his name for years as a son of the Austrian branch of Saxe-Coburg, Bulgaria being still in nominal allegiance to the Ottoman Empire.

From 1887 to 1896 the Sultan had refused to accept his qualifications as Prince Regnant, and the great powers had kept Ferdinand waiting from October 5, 1908, till April 29, 1909, for the recognition of his right to a kingly title. The *coup de théâtre* of his proclamation as Czar of the Bulgarians, in the old town of Tirnovo, had been concomitant with the annexation by the Austrian Em-

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

pire of the two provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was to be the last happy stroke of the Austrian policy and had taken place only six years before the outbreak of the World War, and ten years before the ultimate destruction, in 1918, of the imperial throne of the Hapsburgs.

The first night we spent at the Prince Boris Hotel in Tirnovo had been most eventful. We had been well received by the municipality of the town, better even than tourists could expect. The mayor and the chief justice of Tirnovo had called on us on our arrival and insisted on sharing our dinner. The latter dignitary had become confidential as time and dishes went on. He was an elderly man. He murmured in my ear that in 1873 he had been one of the Bulgarian delegation which went to Dresden, where my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Prince and Princess Georges Bibesco, then lived, to offer to them no less than the throne of Bulgaria.

I had vaguely heard of this event, which had taken place long before my birth, in the stories of my husband's family. My mother-in-law, questioned by me, had told me how Bismarck, with whom she was on friendly terms, had advised her not to accept the proposal, which would have placed her in surroundings quite unsuited to her tastes and education. The yet unpublished memoirs of my father-in-law will some day reveal

the negotiations which then took place, involving the courts of Russia, Germany, and Rumania. The thing ended by the choice of a prince of Battenberg, who remained in Bulgaria for a very short time and had to flee for his life.

Did our presence in Tirnovo remind the people of some vague connection with that story, or were they simply rejoicing at the arrival of three motor cars in their town, seldom visited by tourists? I could not tell, but when our dinner was over we were taken to a balcony, and pink and green fireworks were let off in our honor on the hills of old Tirnovo.

When the time came to retire to our bedrooms, I began to feel a little nervous. I had been told the intimate comforts and cleanliness of the hotel in Tirnovo were not all one could wish for. But my cousin Emmanuel Bibesco, an expert in touring, had reassured me by saying that if we had to put up with a bad night in Tirnovo, the old abandoned capital of Bulgaria, at any rate we should find compensation the next night at Philippopolis, where a modern hotel was kept by good German people.

Our maids and valets were to arrive at Tirnovo by a late train, so we would have to retire to bed unassisted. On entering the room that was to be mine, I was curiously affected by the sight of two large and very worn-out bedroom slippers, of masculine type, in front of my bed. On the night

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

table a comb that showed signs of long usage was exposed in the full light of the lamp. I thought at first that I had entered by mistake a room already occupied and not intended for me.

A Bulgarian manservant, answering the bell, explained to me in bad Rumanian, when I pointed out the comb and slippers to him, that they were always left there for the use of travelers! He seemed quite puzzled when I asked that they should be removed at once.

Without indulging in many more details, I shall only say that when my maid entered my room that night she found me in my night clothes, sitting in splendid isolation on a chair which I had placed in a bathtub filled with water in the middle of the room, gloves on my hands, an open umbrella over my head, reading an English novel. In this way I was protecting myself from the bites of innumerable insects which crept out in a sort of procession from the sides of the bed, climbed the walls and fell from the ceiling. The appropriate powder for their destruction had unwisely been left in the care of my maid.

Well, all this did not matter much the next morning. The sun was bright; late September is lovely in these parts of the world. We were leaving for the much dreamed of Valley of Roses. We should reach Philippopolis at night, where we would be sure to find the nice hotel described by Em-

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

manuel Bibesco. He had taken the precaution to wire to the German manager, he told us, to make sure of a good night after our long day on the Bulgarian roads.

The motors that carried us had to suffer from these roads. There had been several unexplained breakdowns in open fields, and midnight found us still moving slowly across the hilly desert toward the faintly colored clouds that hung over Philipopolis.

The Valley of Roses was now behind us, a deception. We had passed it by twilight, and poetry and imagination were both impotent to make of this forlorn stretch of fields, covered with small dusty bushes, the paradise of color and fragrance we had hoped for. Not a single rose was to be seen in the whole country through which we passed.

Peasants who surrounded our cars when they stopped at Kazanlik, merely a large village, when asked about the roses, shook their heads disdainfully. Roses? Who could expect roses in September? They were picked in May from the thirsty-looking bushes and sent to the factories. We then learned for the first time that roses were just like any other harvest, grown exclusively for trade.

Besides, we were told by one of our chauffeurs who had seen Bulgaria in the springtime, those roses were not much to see; very fragrant, it is



## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

true, but very small and of an ugly color resembling a mixture of water and red wine.

It was past midnight when our three cars, following one another at dust distance, entered the suburbs of Philippopolis. Endless suburbs they were, and very badly paved streets. While we were advancing toward what must be the center of the town, suddenly the pavement ceased altogether and we were cruelly thrown about in the car.

This was our first contact with New Bulgaria. The zealous municipality of Philippopolis had done away with the old Turkish pavement, and large heaps of new paving were displayed on the sides of the main street, but its center was a succession of appalling hollows with neither posts nor lights as warning to the unwary traveler.

After having nearly broken our necks and severely injured the springs of our cars, we at last arrived in front of the much advertised "best hotel" in Philippopolis.

We were received by a somnolent manager with some embarrassment. Three cars? Three ladies? Four gentlemen? Three chauffeurs? More servants coming? Well, there was no possibility of finding room for so many people.

My cousin Emmanuel, who was responsible for our accommodation, came forward and explained in his best German that we were the people for whom seven rooms had been ordered by telegram.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

"Oh!" said the slumbrous manager, "your telegram spoke of booking room number 7, and that has been reserved for you and is at your disposal."

Incredible as it seems in this land of no tourists, the hotel happened to be full up. A congress of veterinarians was in session in the town that very day. All the good men who relieve the pain of animals in the Balkan States were gathered that night precisely in that single hotel, as if a malignant spirit had wished to prevent our having the first night's rest since we had been in Bulgaria. The manager offered to introduce a third bed into the one free room, number 7, for the three Princesses; that was all he could do. Attracted by the noise of our arrival and perhaps by the illumination from the searchlights of our three cars, the manager's wife came forward in her night attire. Her more pitiful heart inspired her to suggest that some arrangement should be made by which the four gentlemen of our party could be lodged, too.

While we were partaking of the cold remains of the veterinarians' supper, our luggage was taken to room number 7.

When we entered it later, the three beds and all our luggage gave it the crowded appearance of a hospital corner on board an emigrant ship. We were very young then, and we laughed at our discomfort.

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

The men had fared even worse. We found out the following day that the manager's wife had turned out the Bulgarian servants from their rooms under the roof in order to give accommodation to the weary travelers. These rooms, of course, had no bathroom, and not even the shadow of a jug or basin.

Next morning in the courtyard of the hotel the four gentlemen could be seen performing their ablutions at the fountain in the open air.

Certainly Bulgaria was not a country prepared for tourists' visits. Of this truth we became increasingly aware as we advanced toward Sofia the next day. Bad as were the mountain roads, they were nothing to what we found in the plains. The motors had positively to crawl, and we were shaken just as the young plum trees were shaken by the vigorous hands of the peasant women gathering the fruit of the season.

Thus we painfully advanced on the broken springs of our cars toward Sofia. The only people we met on the roads were soldiers, mostly artillerymen escorting heavy guns. Pulled by brave little horses that shied at the sight of our cars, for miles the guns went by. We had to stop several times to let them pass; they came on more and more, and we thus lost a good many hours.

We had just fallen upon the time of the maneuvers of the Bulgarian Army and those were the

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

guns which gave Ferdinand I enough self-confidence to declare himself Czar. We were to remember the passage of the gray guns a year after when they were employed to give the initial shake to the peace of Europe.

Sofia is a pretty town surrounded by mountains. We entered it late, tired and exhausted, and as little prepared as possible for worldly entertainment. But we had not reckoned with the strong will of the French Minister, M. Maurice Paléologue, an old friend of ours, who was to become later the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg during the World War.

We found a letter from him awaiting our arrival, saying he would come next morning to call on us at the hotel and take us to write our names in the register of the royal palace, as King Ferdinand had expressed a special desire to meet us.

This hospitable proposal was received with angry feelings by my somewhat out-of-temper companions. Why, after such a dreadfully tiring journey, meet a King? We had come to Bulgaria as tourists, and this was foolish enough. Tourists we would remain. The most indignant of the protesters against the royal proposals was Princess Eugène Murat. She was a descendant of Maréchal Ney, who started his career as a republican; she would not put up with the inconvenience of mixing

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

Baedeker and the *Almanach de Gotha*, touring and court reception; she declared herself on strike.

That night we all shared her views with more or less energy, according to our state of nervous fatigue. We should see M. Paléologue the next morning and tell him to exert his diplomatic skill to excuse our irreverence. On this negative decision we all went to bed.

Next morning found the French Minister at our doors. He was introduced into the sitting-room which was shared by all our party.

We were just enjoying a late breakfast when he arrived. We explained to him our desire to remain in Sofia unknown and unseen. "Not see the King!" he exclaimed. "But that is quite impossible! First of all, there is nothing else to be seen in Bulgaria; believe me, he is the only artist in a country where there is no art. He is the only curiosity in a country where there are no curiosity shops. He is the only show to be seen in a country where there is no theater."

This vivid eulogy of Ferdinand was beginning to efface my indifference and that of Princess Lucien Murat, but our friend Violette Murat seemed unyielding, and so was Emmanuel.

M. Paléologue went on with an exposure of the reasons which made it quite impossible to decline the royal invitation. He brought to our knowledge, most confidentially, that since the King had heard

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

of our arrival, he was expecting our visit and had been informed of all our movements by his police after we had landed in Bulgaria.

He knew all about us and his keen interest had been excited for more than one reason. Two of the ladies of our party were French Princesses, and Ferdinand took legitimate pride in his French descent. Was he not the son of Princess Clementine, daughter of Louis-Philippe, the last French king of the Bourbon family? He knew the Duke de Rohan well, and one of the Princess's uncles, Count de Lasteyrie, had been brought up with the princesses, daughters of Louis-Philippe and his wife, Queen Marie-Amélie.

As for the other Princess Murat, she was a cousin of the imperial family of France, the Bonapartes; and Princess Clementine of Belgium, King Ferdinand's first cousin, had been married, only a year previously, to the head of the Bonaparte family, the Prince Pretender, Victor Napoleon.

The Bibescos, also, King Ferdinand knew well by name, and the French Minister said he had graciously alluded to my recent book on Persia which had been crowned by the French Academy.

Listening to all these flattering words, we felt that we had been discovered and that it was too late to attempt to slip out of Bulgaria unnoticed. The Minister added that even our motor performances would be a matter of interest to His Majesty, as the



KING FERDINAND OF BULGARIA

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

King was very fond of motoring and was about the only person in Bulgaria, except the diplomats, to own and drive motor cars.

Our trip through his country had interested him to such an extent that we were told he had postponed his annual journey to his shooting place in Hungary, expressly to receive us in Sofia. His special train, ordered for that same day, had been countermanded and his journey put off. This was proof indeed of his interest and courtesy, and it was quite out of the question that we should fail under the circumstances to go and write our names in the royal register this very morning.

The arguments sounded very convincing. Princess Lucien Murat, my husband, and I were ready to surrender, but Princess Eugène Murat's resolution was still unmoved, and so was our Cousin Emmanuel's, though on quite different grounds. He had no suitable clothes to wear, either for tea or dinner with the King and Queen. His principle when motoring in a somewhat rough country was to dress on simple lines and not be bothered with servants and extra luggage. His wardrobe was in a single bag he could easily carry himself, and consisted exclusively of flannels.

This the French Minister thought quite a serious objection. King Ferdinand was known to be a great upholder of court etiquette; it was quite impossible that a stranger should be admitted into his



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

presence for the first time wearing flannels. Princess Eugène Murat had quite other reasons for not wishing to see the King, and they had nothing to do with her garments. Brought up as a free citizen of a republic, she avoided Kings from preference, and nothing, she told us, absolutely nothing, would induce her to write her name in Ferdinand's book. She was so perfectly frank and firm, and even obstinate, in the matter that we had to let her do as she pleased. We started for the palace under the leadership of M. Paléologue—Princess Lucien Murat, my husband, and I.

The streets of Sofia were somnolent under the clear sunshine of half-past eleven and not many people were to be seen in the better quarters of the town.

The palace itself, a whitewashed edifice of very moderate proportions, looked no better than well-kept barracks. A sentry at the door, an old servant in the hall, a table covered with the ordinary red velvet tablecloth, the two books with a crowned "F" for Ferdinand and a crowned "E" for Eleanor—that was all. The lackeys held the pen for each of us in turn, and it was over.

Coming out of the palace, I urged the French Minister to take me to what was to me, a tourist and a writer, of as much interest as the royal grounds. This was the open-air market of Sofia that was held every Friday in the lower part of the

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

town. My husband and Princess Lucien Murat left us, and during our walk to the market place M. Paléologue reveled again in his favorite subject of conversation, the extraordinary personality of Ferdinand of Bulgaria. In his opinion this monarch of a small Balkan realm had all the shrewd intelligence and artistic tastes of the Valois, the French Kings during the Renaissance. He was uncommonly gifted, imaginative, cruel, and artistic. A writer of novels himself, M. Paléologue depicted him with all the skill of a literary man.

We had seen no roses in Kazanlik, but we should see some marvelous ones in the King's private gardens if we went to Vrania, his country place. At Vrania he had planned the gardens and made them beautiful with all kinds of water lilies, lotus, nenuphars, and even the African *Victoria Regia* in a special hothouse. No, indeed, the Valley of Roses was not in Kazanlik, inhabited by these coarse-looking peasants, among those dusty bushes, but nestling eleven kilometers from Sofia, behind the walls surrounding the royal grounds; and he, Ferdinand, was the Czar of the hidden Valley of Roses.

His refinement and taste for everything beautiful went so far with him that it extended not only to the breeding of rare animals, such as gazelles, but also to the keeping of an unheard-of sort of game in his forests of Vrania and Exinograd. These were some wonderful specimens of butterflies, specially

imported from South America. When he walked among the clearings of his forests his greatest pleasure was to see the flight of those strange butterflies as beautiful as living emeralds and sapphires.

Precious stones he treasured, and not only did he make a collection of them but he also loved playing with them, and always had ready at hand on his desk some rare stone of great beauty and value to toy with.

As a man of wit and extreme pleasantness of manner, King Ferdinand was everything one could wish, but as far as politics went, he was not to be trusted. He rather despised the simple people over whom his ambition alone had brought him to reign. He relied only on the brutal force of their fighting qualities. Assassins and convicts, he used to call them. At other times "My bullocks" was the endearing term for his people. But he was confident of their fighting qualities. He hated Russia for pretending to be the protector power over Bulgaria. He was impatient to break the ties of gratitude his people were supposed to have with Russia.

His ambition was so great that it sometimes made his intelligence waver. He dreamed of restoring for his own benefit the Byzantine Empire, and Bulgaria for him was only the military background for Constantinople. When he had had the impertinence to call himself a Czar, it had been in anticipation of

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

one day conquering Tzarigrad, the Balkanic name for Constantinople, Cæsar's town.

His inordinate ambition, as a first result, had made him superstitious. Feeling that his schemes were perhaps out of proportion to the power of the Bulgarian nation, he called to his help the powers of darkness. All sorts of things were whispered about his supernatural doings.

What kind of a woman was the Queen, I then asked. Did he like her?

Queen Eleanor was just a convenience to him and nothing more; she was known in court circles in Europe for her charity and nursing during the Russo-Japanese War. She had remained unmarried for a very long time. It was whispered King Ferdinand had just married a German hospital nurse ready to help in time of war.

His first wife, Princess Louise of Bourbon-Parma, mother of his four children, had been delightful, a very popular princess. She was said to have suffered much because of him and remained a sentimental and pathetic figure in the minds of the people.

This long talk about King Ferdinand brought us to the market place of Sofia, which I had so wished to see. My eyes were dazzled with the color and the movement of thousands of peasants trading in the open air. Vegetables, live chickens, ducks,

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

geese, lambs, pigeons, fruit, and eggs in quantities were displayed on the ground on large squares of rough linen.

At my request we entered the thick of the crowd. Everything interested me; I wanted to see all I could of the Bulgarian peasantry. After one hour of investigation, M. Paléologue made a remark showing his great keenness of observation, to which I agreed on the spot:

“Did you notice that among those peasant women, from the old to the very young, we did not see a single pretty face?”

This was perfectly true, and it reminded me of the opinion I had often heard expressed by my father and my uncles, who had fought in this part of the world during the war of 1877. They had spoken about the lack of beauty of the Bulgarian women. High cheek bones, small wrinkled eyes, large flat mouths, noses shaped like potatoes, long narrow plaits of colorless hair, coarse skins, flat square bodies—this is their description. I had heard my father explain half jokingly the historical reason for this ugliness of the women-folk of Bulgaria. While Rumania, on the other side of the Danube, in spite of her defeat and numerous invasions by the Turks, remained a self-governed country under her own princes, Bulgaria had to surrender completely to the power of the Sultan, and to such an extent that she was governed by Turkish pashas for more

than four centuries. The pashas acted in Bulgaria according to their invariable custom in every conquered province. Their emissaries in every village gathered all the nice-looking girls and sent them over like cattle to the harems of Constantinople. The only women who remained to be wed by the poor Bulgarians were the ugly ones, the pimples and the badly shaped. This form of selection resulted in the systematic decrease of the good looks of the Bulgarian people. With his artistic taste, King Ferdinand certainly had to suffer from the plainness of his subjects, both male and female.

We reached the hotel for luncheon at a late hour. After entering, on our way back, a shop in the window of which a display of post cards had attracted my eye, I found there a gilded post card of a make I had never seen before. It represented King Ferdinand in the array of a Byzantine Emperor, his face and hands showing among golden garments of the erratic shape used for icons. Thus he looked something like the Emperor Justinian. On his gilded shoes the Byzantine eagles stood out in relief. This amazing post card, sold for a few pence, was a vivid illustration of what the French Minister had told me of Ferdinand's immeasurable ambition. I bought the post card, and often did I think of it when one year later the first Balkan War was started, which took Ferdinand and his army close to Constantinople.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

We were late for luncheon at the hotel and found the party discussing a letter my husband had just received from Count de Clinchamp, the French secretary of His Majesty, the Czar of the Bulgars. This letter contained a formal invitation not only for the three of us who had written our names in the book but also for the refractory ones who had refused to do so. For Prince Léon Ghika and Lieutenant Cantemir the question was settled, as they had left by an early train, having an appointment in Bucharest they could not postpone. But what about Princess Eugène Murat and Emmanuel Bibesco? She tried her best to resist once more and escape her fate, but the French Minister was so firm this time and spoke so haughtily of the harm she would inflict on the reputation of French good manners that at last she surrendered; and so did Emmanuel Bibesco, for the sake of our family's reputation.

He only warned us that we would have to put up with such clothes as he could find in Sofia ready-made in the short space of time that remained between three o'clock and half-past four. This was the hour appointed by the royal invitation.

Soon afterwards Emmanuel disappeared on his errand, leaving us slightly puzzled as to what he would look like after his visit to the Bulgarian tailors. We were soon to be edified. Five minutes before we were ready to start for the royal palace, Emmanuel appeared in the most extraordinary ar-

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

ray. A redingote, probably intended for a fat Oriental minister, floated around his thin body like a drapery, glittering cuffs showed at his wrists, and they were so obviously independent of his shirt that he had to push them back every minute toward the interior of his sleeves. His necktie, trousers and top hat were beyond description, all of them borrowed from a mysterious person he called one of his Bulgarian friends. He looked so disreputable, on the whole, that I jokingly told our French friends, considering that our party consisted of two Princesses Murat and only one Princess Bibesco, I did hope Emmanuel would be mistaken for a Prince Murat.

Upon this we all left for the palace, crowded into the car of the French Minister, ours having to be hastily repaired after the injuries they had suffered from the Bulgarian roads.

Tea in a high Russian samovar was served in the sitting room, where we were first introduced. A large portrait representing Queen Marie-Amélie, the wife of Louis-Philippe—probably a copy of the famous Winterhalter, showing her in her old age, all dressed in beautiful lace—was the great feature of the room. A moment after our entry, Her Majesty, Queen Eleanor, was announced.

I saw Emmanuel fidgeting with his glaring cuffs once more. The queen entered the room, greeted us all, and went to take her place behind the tea



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

table. She wore a very simple black dress, as if she were in mourning. Her face looked kindly and tired; she spoke in a low tone of infinite sadness. She carried a little fan, and during the interludes of conversation she fanned herself somewhat nervously.

After ten minutes the door of the sitting room, opposite to the one by which Queen Eleanor had entered, opened and King Ferdinand came in.

At first glance he looked more like a man of science, a shrewd philosopher, than anything else. A short pointed beard, grayish, a very long and prominent nose, a tall, somewhat heavy body, in black civilian clothes. Suddenly as he came nearer to me my eyes met his, and never shall I forget the surprise they gave me. Under heavy wrinkled eyelids, those eyes possessed a glance full of extraordinary malice; they were at the same time infinitely wise, infinitely ironical, and they seemed to mock at everything he or you might say. They were small, but to such an extent expressive, shrewd, insistent, superior, that they made you feel quite uncomfortable.

When the King sat down I noticed nothing about him except those extraordinary eyes. One might have called them foxy if they had not given the impression of belonging to a far more powerful animal than the fox. No, what they really re-

minded me of were the cunning little eyes of an elephant. Perhaps the resemblance to this animal was completed by the long nose that had made the fortune of so many political caricaturists all over Europe. Superficial observers had all noticed the nose, so much so that its owner was said to have named it: The One Who Endures. But no photograph, no portraitist, had ever given to the eyes their curious expression, their full value.

While the King talked in a slow nasal voice, his hands played incessantly with a beautiful sapphire hung by a narrow black ribbon to his neck, as an eyeglass might have been. Naturally, this reminded me at once of what I had been told about his passion for precious stones. Since he had been in the room, Queen Eleanor seemed to have sunk completely into the background; he alone upheld the conversation. He addressed his speech to one and then another of his guests until his attention was finally fixed on Emmanuel, in spite of his comical appearance. The monarch seemed at once to appreciate the vivid wit of my cousin and his extraordinary knowledge of the geography of Bulgaria. They went into the deep waters of economic and ethnographic conversation, and everybody else listened.

King Ferdinand inquired about the make of the automobiles that had carried us to his country. With great presence of mind and a tinge of irony,

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Emmanuel answered quickly: "The make—Franchi Obstacle, sire," which meant "The make—Cross Obstacle."

The twinkle in King Ferdinand's eyes increased. "I understand what you mean," he said in his slow nasal voice, and the sapphire in his fingers twinkled too. "Well, well! All the good pavements in Bulgaria have been of Turkish make. But, alas, since the Turks' time the incapacity of my predecessor and the sloppiness of my own government have left everything in decay."

We repressed smiles. Never had we heard before a King speaking of the "sloppiness" of his government, as evident as it might have been!

I then entered into the conversation for fear the remark of my cousin should have hurt Ferdinand's feelings; and wishing to bring his thoughts back to his great scheme, I said: "It is a fact the roads are somewhat bad in Bulgaria. Perhaps they are insufficient for private automobiles, but I daresay they are good enough for artillery guns."

Again the curious eyes looked crossways at me, with their funny twinkle. The King smiled, but did not answer. Then he got up and asked me, "Are you interested in visiting this old Turkish hovel, my palace?" I protested that I was intensely interested.

We went from room to room and I was asked several questions about Rumania, the Rumanian

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

court, Paris and the literary salons, and the way I had spent my morning.

I said I had been visiting the market and buying post cards. I did not mention what post card.

"Ah!" said the King, "it is Friday. To-day is market day. My good people exchange their bad smells."

I laughed, but he did not. Seeing his seriousness, I repressed my gayety; evidently, I thought to myself, this refined man, this highly cultivated brain, resents bitterly living among these primitive half-educated people.

As if he were reading my thoughts, he then asked: "How long do you intend to stay among my bullocks?"

I said we intended leaving next morning for Plevna and then back to Rumania, sailing across the Danube.

When taking leave, the last words of the Czar were to recommend us to visit his gardens at Vrania on our way home. He also gave a special farewell to Emmanuel Bibesco, whose knowledge of the map of Bulgaria seemed to have stirred his admiration. To him he addressed his last bow.

"I salute you, great geographer," he said, and with a last wave of the hand, still toying with his sapphire, King Ferdinand left the room.

Next morning, our cars being repaired, we left

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Sofia early and visited on our way back, as King Ferdinand had allowed us to do, the gardens of Vrania.

There, indeed, a paradise of color and fragrance awaited us. Brilliant with dew, the September roses of the most exquisite essence, the latest production of the horticultural industries of France, England, Belgium, Germany, were grouped on the lawns of the regal park. Ponds were covered with the large leaves of the Japanese lotus. The late water lilies were flowering.

We were shown to the hothouses by the head gardener, a Frenchman. We admired the *Victoria Regia* in its tank filled with hot water, and some allusion was made among our party to my splendid isolation, sitting in my tin tub during that eventful night in Tirnovo. We also visited the stables under the leadership of the stable master, and to our great surprise we were shown two elephants standing in a great separate stable.

We were told they were His Majesty's pets, his favorite animals. To my intense amusement I was confirmed in my first impression. In looking at the oldest elephant I discovered in the twinkle of his small malicious eyes the very expression of wisdom, keen understanding, and malignity that had struck me the day before in other eyes.

In the autumn of 1912, only one year after our motor journey to Bulgaria, the first Balkan War

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

had broken out. The heavy guns we had seen in long procession on the bad roads were firing at Tchachaldja, Queen Eleanor was nursing the wounded, and the great powers of Europe began to fear the Lesser Czar would push his way to Constantinople. Perhaps the gilded post card had not been printed in vain.

But Russia was on the watch. Could the benefactress allow her *protégée* to go so far as to realize for her own selfish ends the scheme of Peter the Great? Would Ferdinand of Bulgaria walk into St. Sophia as the Christian prince, avenger of the Cross, and destroyer of the Crescent?

But this was not to be. The Bulgarian army, for some mysterious reason, suddenly stopped, almost in view of the old Byzantine walls.

In court circles in Rumania, among diplomats in Paris, many contradictory rumors were to be heard. Well-informed people maintained that King Ferdinand had heard there was a dreadful epidemic among the Turkish Army in Constantinople. The sick soldiers had been carried into the mosques, and St. Sophia itself had been turned into a hospital for the cholera sufferers.

King Ferdinand was known to have a terror of microbes. Some people gave that reason for his not entering Constantinople at the head of his troops. But those better informed knew that he had been stopped from doing so by strong advice coming

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

from a great northern power. He then wrote to one of his friends in Paris: "You can tell those who think that I am afraid of microbes that the form of cholera which stopped my entering St. Sophia is called Russia!"

Bulgaria soon after started her quarrel with her two allies, Greece and Serbia, over their common prey, the Turkish Empire, and the second Balkan War of 1913 began, short prelude to the World War of 1914.

When King Ferdinand joined arms with Germany and Austria, it was to avenge himself for having been stopped by Russia on his way to Constantinople. His malignity had been stronger than his wisdom. His country was to be involved in the defeat of the Central Powers. Queen Eleanor, the wife he had wed to nurse his soldiers, had fulfilled her hard duty and died during the War.

Ferdinand was the first of so many Kings in Europe to lose his crown in 1918. His flight from Sofia marked the first sign of the coming peace. He fled to Germany and remained hidden in Coburg, the old home of his father's family, unnoticed, unseen, unheard of, all through the German Revolution. His son, Prince Boris, succeeded him and now reigns over a diminished Bulgaria.

Twelve years after, in 1923, another journey took me, my husband, and one of the French delegates

## THE CZAR OF THE VALLEY OF ROSES

to the League of Nations on another visit to Bulgaria. Again we crossed the Danube and went to Sofia, but it was by train this time. We were taken to Vrania, still the show place of Bulgaria, and once more we saw the roses. This time it was in July and they were in their greatest glory; they had survived their master's fall.

We were shown as before the lily pond, the hothouse, and the stables. The old elephant was still in his box; the young one alone had died during the War.

"He has grown very wild in getting old," said his guardian.

The Rumanian minister who visited the place with us, once a young secretary in the time of King Ferdinand, whispered to me, "Do you see the resemblance?"

Lately the papers commented on the trip of the ex-King of Bulgaria to the tropical forests of South America, seeking solitude. The once ambitious Czar of the Valley of Roses concentrates now on his old taste for rare and beautiful butterflies. It may be that he has learned more wisdom.



## CHAPTER V

### SOPHIE, THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

ALL my life long I have heard people talk about the vacant throne of Albania and of the people who hoped to occupy it.

The accession of Ahmet Zogu to this throne removes once for all even the shadow of a crown from the brow of a young woman whom I once knew.

But before relating the history of Sophie of Wied, the ephemeral sovereign of Albania, I am going to speak of her predecessors in the pursuit of this elusive throne, which seemed to flee from all who approached it. The proud and savage nature of this beautiful and mountainous country, composed of natural fortresses, had predestined it to struggles of pride and poverty. Last stronghold of feudalism in Europe, it inevitably attracted the hopes of aspirants to monarchical power. I had heard from my earliest childhood of Prince Albert Ghika, as of the most vociferous, if not the most serious, of the pretenders to the throne of Albania. He belonged to a Rumanian family of Albanian origin and was also related to my own family.

His proclamations, his pretensions, his extrava-

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

gances, and his debts had for years past afforded a subject of conversation for his native town of Jassy, for Bucharest, even for Paris, where he had established his headquarters.

The idea that the conquest of the crown of Albania might become a good subject for an operetta had excited my imagination from the moment when I first listened to my parents telling and ironically commenting on the adventures of their cousin, "The Pretender."

After Albert Ghika, or possibly at the same time, another candidate to the throne appeared in the shape of a French prince, brother of Philip of Orleans, the pretender to the throne of France. This was Ferdinand, Duke of Montpensier. While Albert Ghika had very little money and saw in the throne of Albania a means of procuring it, the Duke of Montpensier was a very rich Prince.

In the course of a cruise which he made in the Adriatic, the Prince fell in love with the idea—why, I cannot say—of reigning over this country, with so exquisite a coast line, and over its proud if inaccessible inhabitants who wore such lovely clothes.

The Duke of Montpensier returned to Paris, consulted his friends, notified his bankers, heard through confidential sources of the financial difficulties of his rival, made his calculations and re-

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

solved to undertake a journey to Albania the following year, as pretender to the throne.

I only saw once the Duke of Montpensier, but that was enough to make me realize his extraordinary resemblance to King Louis XVI. The face of Ferdinand, this later Bourbon of the younger branch, whose grandfather, Philippe-Egalité, had voted for the execution of the French King during the revolution, reproduced by a curious phenomenon of heredity the very features of the unfortunate husband of Marie Antoinette.

This fatal resemblance made one foresee by analogy that the Duke of Montpensier would not succeed in his enterprise because he was that heavy and timid sort of man who would be more likely to lose a crown if he had one than to acquire a new one.

Some months later, when the newspapers had been discussing the cruise of the French Prince along the Albanian coast, I happened to meet a journalist who had been one of the party on the trip. As the expedition had not been successful, the journalist thought he was at liberty to speak of what had occurred. His account was exceedingly racy.

He told me that on the announcement of the yacht's arrival the most reputable of the Albanians had taken to the hills, while the less scrupulous had come down to the coast to pay an interested visit to the Pretender. Each fresh day brought a little

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

group of Albanian notabilities on board. The Prince shook hands with his partisans, but no sooner had he said "Good morning" to them, than they answered "How much?"

The shady appearance of his future subjects, their strange habit of greeting the proffered hand by the hand stretched out to receive, this allegiance that they brought to him like an Eastern rug in exchange for cash, ended by so disgusting the Duke of Montpensier that he took the road back to Marseilles without asking either for his change or for his receipted bill.

Yet a third candidate for the throne of Albania gave me the opportunity of studying for myself from the life the psychology of a person who believed that she was predestined from one moment to another to become Queen of Albania, just as imperatively, and in a fashion even more unexpectedly, than a chrysalis changes into a butterfly.

I first met the Princess of Wied, ephemeral sovereign of a country which she had never seen, when I was fifteen years old. She was then Princess Sophie of Schönburg-Waldenburg, of a mediatized German princely family, and she spent a considerable portion of the year with her mother, who was a widow, and her two brothers, on their Rumanian estate at Fantineli, in the mountains of Moldavia, which they had inherited from a Rumanian grandmother.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Sophie was a young woman only a few years older than myself, and when I saw her for the first time I found her intelligent and sympathetic.

When she came to Posada (the estate of my father-in-law in the Carpathians, near Sinaïa, the summer residence of the Rumanian royal family), she was a young, fresh, rather stolid German girl, with a beautiful complexion, a clumsy figure, and an excellent appetite. Shortly after this first meeting, she became transformed, thanks to the poetry and the music, as well as to the influence of a romantic Queen, into a quite different sort of person.

After their visit to my parents-in-law, the Princess of Schönburg-Waldenburg and her daughter, Sophie, accepted an invitation from Queen Carmen Sylva to visit her at her castle of Sinaïa, only a short distance from our home.

From this visit to the poet-queen, a woman of the highest intelligence, an idealist imbued with all the seductions of the mind, young Princess Sophie returned totally subjugated. Never had the domination of one personality over another been more instantaneous and more irresistible.

As soon as they met, the Queen had taken the young woman into her affectionate friendship, and she had begged her mother, the Princess of Schönburg-Waldenburg, to leave Sophie with her for a few weeks longer. The visit was extended over a

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

month, and the young Princess was then installed in the castle of Sinaia.

She was an excellent musician and played the harp charmingly, which delighted the Queen, who lived in her home in the Carpathians like a Princess of the Italian Renaissance, surrounded by musicians and artists.

A great moral transformation, followed shortly after by a physical one, took place that year in the person of Sophie of Schönburg-Waldenburg. When I saw her, a year later, she was slight, ethereal, diaphanous, living for poetry, and nourished, one would think, on dew. Her figure had become extremely *svelte*, her beautiful color had disappeared, she seemed a reed ready to break, but her eyes shone with a strange brilliancy. She talked only of art, of music, of literature, and uttered the name of Carmen Sylva with an air of adoration.

We soon learned that the great favor shown her had already made her some enemies, which was inevitable and could hardly fail to happen in the case of a foreigner living at the court. At this time, when she was still only a young woman, and the daughter of a mediatised German princess, she had by error been given precedence at table over a Rumanian lady of high standing, and much older than herself.

This lady, the wife of the minister in charge, and *doyenne* of the diplomatic corps at Vienna, hap-

pened to be Princess Catherine Ghika. She was a relative of ours, the granddaughter on her mother's side of the reigning Prince Bibesco, and was very insistent that no one should fail to show her the respect due to her rank. Being placed at the royal table after Princess Sophie of Schönburg-Waldenburg, she had been exceedingly put out. She came to tell my mother-in-law what had happened and to read her the letter which she had written to the *grande-maitresse* of the court, in which she pointed out that being the granddaughter of a sovereign who had occupied the same throne and reigned in the same capital as King Charles and Queen Carmen Sylva, she had no intention of yielding up her place to a little mediatized German Princess who was not even married.

This trivial but irritating question of precedence had for the first time drawn in my imagination a comparison between the name of the Pretender to the throne of Albania, Albert Ghika, and that of the Princess Sophie.

To occupy a social position which others contest is perhaps the surest way of coveting yet another such position. Spoiled children often get what they want, and certainly Sophie, at the court of Carmen Sylva, was a spoilt child.

Her engagement to a nephew of the Queen, the son of the elder brother, Prince William of Wied, was talked about this same year.



PRINCESS SOPHIE OF WIED



## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

The affection which Carmen Sylva felt for Sophie of Schönburg-Waldenburg had gone on increasing and had assumed the proportions of a mother's love for her child with this childless woman. Soon this marriage, which was to make of these two women aunt and niece, was definitely decided on and officially announced.

Sophie spent the whole period of her engagement at the castle of Sinaia. She came to call on us at Posada, in the carriage of her future aunt, the Queen. It was drawn by four little cream-colored ponies, a present from the King of Sweden, which she drove herself.

The marriage of Princess Sophie with Prince William of Wied, which was celebrated in Germany, put her once more in the honorable but secondary position of a mere mediatized Princess, and save at the court of Rumania, where she was entitled to a specially privileged position as a niece of the Queen, her position had not changed for the better.

A journey we made in Germany, my husband and I, took us to Berlin, whence we visited Potsdam where Prince and Princess William of Wied were in garrison, about two years after their marriage. We lunched with them, and I saw their first child, then only a few months old. I also saw the little villa where they lived, exactly like a dozen others, where other young couples of high birth but humble

means spent a monotonous existence, condemned like them to a soldier's profession, and like them struck by the sterile discipline of the Prussian monarchy. Princess Sophie was languishing visibly in the aristocratic but provincial setting of a garrison town, uneventful and unromantic.

Every one who had ever come in contact with Queen Carmen Sylva retained as it were a sort of homesickness for a more beautiful and more mysterious existence; and the very setting of the country where she lived added a powerful charm, half-eastern and half-savage, to what her natural exaltation imagined in order to beautify existence.

Brought up in Rumania during the greater part of her life, impregnated with the sunshine of her adopted country, the Princess of Wied struck me as a stranger in Germany. On the walls of her rooms I recognized everywhere Rumanian pictures, carpets, icons, embroideries, and even in her dress I observed the influence of Carmen Sylva, when I saw her clad in white material woven by our peasant women. The aunt, even from afar, continued to exert over her niece a magic and almost absolute power.

Neither husband nor child nor the narrow restricted life of the little imperial town on the outskirts of Berlin counted for Sophie in comparison with the sunny days and moonlit nights of Sinaïa, where the splashing of the fountains accompanied

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

the melodious voice of the Queen, where all the arts—painting, music, poetry—combined to captivate the heart to the wailing notes of Enesco's violin.

In the little drawing-room at Potsdam, the golden harp alone, with its vibrant strings, revealed the presence of a romantic genius exiled in these regions without mystery and without beauty.

I came away from my visit to Germany with the conviction that Sophie was bored and that she bitterly regretted Sinaia.

A year later, we learned at Posada that the political arrangements of Austria, seconded by the secret efforts of Queen Carmen Sylva, had resulted in the nomination of the Prince of Wied as candidate to the still vacant throne of Albania.

This news seemed to me in the highest degree entertaining. I was young, and European politics were still an innocent amusement for me, a game of chess, as it were, of which it pleased me to fathom the mysteries and to watch with my own eyes the psychological working of the hidden springs. The terrible consequences of the game had not yet been brought home to me.

The autumn of 1913, only a few months before the fatal year 1914, was thus marked for me by the unexpected accession of Sophie of Wied to a throne coveted in turn by Albert Ghika and the Duke of Montpensier.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

No one who knew the Prince and Princess of Wied had the smallest doubt that it was she, and she alone, who, under the influence of Carmen Sylva, had claimed this foreign crown. Prince William was a man of simple tastes, a good German officer who, left to his own devices, would certainly never have dreamed of this promotion to a monarch's throne.

Under the ægis of her aunt, Princess Sophie pictured herself as Queen of a country of eastern Europe, and she beheld in imagination in the heart of the mountains of Albania another Sinaïa, other fountains, other embroidered costumes, another court with its poets, artists, and musicians, and among them all, her hand caressing the golden harp, she herself, ruling over a picturesque people, just like her dearly loved aunt.

This beautiful dream encountered, however, in the chancelleries of Europe certain practical objections. The official candidature of Prince William of Wied was not recognized by all the great powers. Some of them saw in this German Prince backed by Austria a direct blow to Italy.

The demon of the great European quarrel, the fight to the death between Slavs and Germans for the conquest of the Mediterranean took, under a fresh form and across the heart of Sophie, the roundabout road of Albania. A sovereign, a *protégée* of Austria and imposed by Germany, set upon

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

the shores of the Adriatic, was Germanism itself at the very doors of Italy.

Sophie of Wied, in a state of the most intense emotion and mad with impatience, awaited in King Carol and Queen Carmen Sylva's castle of Sinaia, the difficult agreement of the Powers. She had to wait a long time for it. France, Italy and Russia would not hear of the Prince of Wied. Nor was he at all certain that the Albanians themselves wanted him. Who was going to finance the undertaking? The house of Wied was not rich and Sophie herself had two brothers who had inherited her father's fortune. Were the revenues of the Rumanian property of Fantineli sufficient to run the candidature of Prince William of Wied in Europe and in Albania?

The journalist's story came back to my mind: "The Prince said 'Good morning' to them, and they answered 'How much?'"

Of all these difficulties, Sophie, however, dazzled by her dream, did not appear to reck. She had faith. She saw herself a queen. She already talked to us of the natural beauties of her future realm, which she had never seen. There were cypress trees at Durazzo and Tirana, which would replace on her new horizon the giant firs of Sinaia. Life there would be one unending series of excursions, rides, reviews, songs, adventures, in the midst of a noble people clad in brilliant costumes.

The idea of reigning went to her head. She was

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

so enchanted with the thought that she welcomed even the difficulties, and if she had to suppress revolution, well, she felt herself ready to suffer for Albania and to suppress it.

It was while Princess Sophie of Wied was in this frame of mind that we acted together in some *tableaux vivants* at the little court theater of Sinaïa, given in honor of the anniversary of Carmen Sylva. I had to appear in a scene taken from a story written by the Queen herself. It was a somber story in which Princess Sophie took the part of a bad monk of the Middle Ages and I, his unworthy penitent, clad in a long white robe, with flowing locks, confessed to the monk.

During the rehearsals, and every day before this *fête*, I saw Princess Sophie continually, either at our house at Posada or at the castle of Sinaïa, where we met in secret with the children of the Crown Princess (to-day Queen Marie), to prepare for the famous theatrical representation, composed of amateurs only and intended to celebrate the poetical genius of Carmen Sylva. According to the pure German tradition, the *fête* had to be an *ueber-raschung*, a surprise, and the Queen was not supposed to know the reason for our frequent meetings. It was thus by seeing Princess Sophie almost daily in the theater that I followed the progress of the negotiations undertaken by Austria in favor of the candidature of the Prince of Wied.

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

At last, on the very day of the performance and just as if the Emperor Francis Joseph had wanted to give this present to the Queen of Rumania for her birthday, the great news arrived: the throne of Albania would be occupied by a German Prince.

The dream of Sophie, suggested to her mind by her dearly loved aunt, was that day fulfilled. On the stage of the little theater I made pretense at confessing to a monk whose face was beaming with joy beneath his hood.

Albania under German influence: more Austrian ships, more Austrian guns finding beyond Trieste and Pola new naval stations on the coast of the Adriatic, that in fact was the real outcome of the dreams of the good aunt and of her niece.

Would the Europe of 1913, still groaning under the first shock of the Balkan War, submit to the *fait accompli*? My father, who was the best judge I ever met of European politics and who at that time was a member of the Rumanian government, was more doubtful about the success of the venture and considered it ill-timed.

But the enthusiastic determination of Carmen Sylva, her insistence, her eloquent advances to the Austrian and German courts, as well as to Mr. Maioresco, Rumanian Premier at the time, triumphed over every obstacle encountered by the candidature of the Prince of Wied, by this time

SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER  
officially backed by the Triple Alliance and their satellites.

The day was won and dear Sophie was to be Queen. But would she after all really be Queen? To become "Your Majesty" all at once, was that not asking too much of the Powers, being rather greedy? After all, said the critics, no one had ever heard of the kingdom, only of the principality of Albania. So enchanted were they, however, with their dream come true that neither aunt nor niece bothered much about these subtle distinctions.

Princess Sophie came to Posada for the last time on November 17, 1913, a few days before her final departure for Albania. She was accompanied by the Crown Princess of Rumania, by Prince Karl-Emile of Fürstenberg, who was the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Bucharest, and by his charming wife, the Princess May.

The evening before Queen Carmen Sylva had asked me to invite the sisters of the French order of St. Vincent de Paul, with whom Her Majesty knew I was intimate. The Mother Superior, Sister Pucci, and two of the sisters had for years carried on their worthy charity in Albania. Carmen Sylva had thought that no one better than these nuns could describe the country to the Princess who was about to reign over it.

They had been all over Albania, on horseback and on foot, going from village to village for years



## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

past. They could speak to Princess Sophie of men and things with all the sincerity of their calling and all the conviction derived from personal experience.

A veritable conference took place round the tea table at Posada. While pouring out tea for my guests, I listened to the conversation of the nuns with a purely ethnographical interest. Warned by my sagacious father, I was rather skeptical as to the outcome of this royal adventure. Nor was it in my character to believe in imported monarchies. I had watched the ascension of Sophie to the throne of Albania without forgetting Albert Ghika and the Duke of Montpensier.

The Mother Superior first of all described with considerable charm the beauty of the climate, the pure air of the high mountains which mingled with the salt air of the sea.

Unfortunately, the habitable towns were low down, near the coast, and were less healthy. As to the people, there were both good and bad as elsewhere. Generally speaking, the Albanians were decent folk, fond of fighting, very proud, very poor, very independent. No one cared to pay taxes; every one preferred remaining at home in his fortified village with his sheep. There were lots of clans, frequently at war with one another. Quarrels, often bloody, occurred between village and village, family and family. The sisters advised the future sovereign to be very circumspect and to

appear very little in public. The influence of Islam was still powerful and the rôle of woman (even were she the wife of one of the chiefs) was restricted. There were no artists, no musicians, no poets in Albania: only the shepherd's pipe in the mountains.

The roads were bad and indeed almost inexistent. There was no question of taking a motor car into the mountainous part of the country. At Durazzo and all along the coast were swarms of mosquitoes and in the mountains scarcely any water.

Gradually, as Sister Pucci talked, reality slowly took the place of dreams. No, the country had but little resemblance to Sinaïa, the Eden of Queen Carmen Sylva; in fact, it had no resemblance to it whatsoever. Princess Sophie would have to be very careful for her children, as malaria raged at Durazzo, at Tirana, and all along the coast.

It did not look as if she could fix her residence higher up in the hills, owing to the want of roads and the general insecurity in the mountainous regions of Albania. There she would always be exposed to sudden attack. As these savage highlanders detested any form of government, it did not look as if the Prince and Princess of Wied could inhabit the healthy part of the country, at any rate to begin with, and until their crown had become more stable.

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

As the Sister talked, I felt that a shadow was passing over the face of Princess Sophie.

When Sister Pucci had finished describing Albania and the Albanians, it was time to go, and we went in silence to the library where the visitors' book was kept. The Crown Princess signed first, then came the turn of Princess Sophie of Wied, and then that of the Austrian Minister and of the Princess of Fürstenberg.

While the good-bys were being said and the Princess of Wied was thanking the kind Sisters, the Crown Princess and Princess May Fürstenberg returned to the visitors' book, and while they leaned over the last page, I saw them exchange a smile. Courageously, and for the first time, Sophie of Wied had signed just "Sophie," like a real queen.

On the steps of the front door and after my guests had left, Sister Pucci came back to me and said:

"Will you please tell the Princess Sophie that I have forgotten something very important. One must never say '*Merci*' to an Albanian."

"But why not, Sister? Do they never give you any cause for saying 'Thank you'?"

The sister began to laugh:

"No, it's not that. But in Albanian, the French word '*merci*' is the worst insult you can give."

I ran to the Princess, who was already in her carriage, and gave her this last bit of advice.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

The autumn of 1913 ended in torrential rains. The golden leaves of the beech trees too early covered the valley of Posada. The Powers only agreed to the candidature of Prince William in February, 1914. From the newspapers we learnt that the Princess of Wied had arrived safe and sound in her kingdom, and that she ascended the throne on the seventh of March of that same year.

But was it really quite a kingdom? The etiquette specialists, the authorities on precedence, and unkind lady friends spent much time in arguing about the question. Prince William of Wied had been recognized as the "Mbret" of Albania and that only by a section of the Powers. A few half-hearted adherences were announced, but not the most important: Russia, Italy, and France held back.

We argued about the meaning of the word Mbret. Did it mean king or merely prince? Would the Mbretess Sophie be a queen? Would she have a right to the magic words, "Her Majesty"? Should one curtsey to her?

I thought of the fresh young German girl whose arrival with her mother at Posada I had witnessed only a few years before. What would become of Sophie of Albania, pushed by her romantic imagination on this tottering throne?

Happily nothing tragic occurred. The outbreak of War in 1914 recalled Prince William of Wied to the colors of his country, which he had never

## THE EPHEMERAL QUEEN OF ALBANIA

much wanted to leave; Princess Sophie and her children had to fly from Durazzo and to return to Germany. The golden harp and the old family furniture remained in Albania, where they became the spoils of the revolutionaries. There were no further losses.

To-day, when Achmet Zogu has been proclaimed King of Albania, only a signature in the visitors' book at Posada with the far-away date of November 17, 1913, bears witness that in that place, on that day, at that hour, Princess Sophie thought herself Queen.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SHADOW EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS

THERE is an Emperor of Russia who, at the present time, may be considered by the government of the Soviets as Lenin once was by the government of the Czars—an exile, a negligible phantom, nothing more than a shadow. But for those who have watched the downfall of the Russian Empire, it is not so very difficult to imagine a reversal of existing things, and this ghost may one day triumph over the reality of to-day. Twenty-one years were sufficient for the French Revolution and all the glories of Napoleon, and then we find, at the end, a Bourbon, brother of Louis XVI, sitting on the throne of France. For my part, I believe that restoration is always successful, but that it never lasts. Whatever the future may bring forth, I should like to define and describe the hypothetical ruler of Russia, heir to the throne of Peter the Great, whom I knew in years past in the intimacy of his family. Remembering the expression, the Shadow Cabinet, which the English use to designate their future government while it is still in opposition, I shall call the Grand

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

Duke Cyril the "Shadow Emperor of all the Russias."

From my early girlhood I took an interest in him for two reasons. He was a naval officer, and he was the hero of a love story such as one reads of only in old romances. It was at the court of Rumania, in the intimate circle of his cousin and sister-in-law, the Crown Princess, who became Queen Marie of Rumania, that my interest in him was awakened, and that is how I began my childish investigations to discover that part of his life previous to my time.

Born in Tsarskoë Selo, in 1876, grandson of the Emperor Alexander II, nephew of the Emperor Alexander III, first cousin of the Czarevitch, who was to reign under the name of Nicholas II, the Grand Duke Cyril came into this world surrounded by all the glamour of an autocratic court, in a setting of Romanoff splendor. His name was at once inscribed on the list of imperial allowances, at the chapter of the appanages, and this made of him, as it did of every newborn grand duke, a millionaire by divine right. His father was the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovitch, brother of the reigning Emperor; his mother, Marie Pavlovna, born Duchess of Mecklenburg, was known at the court of Rumania under the name of "Auntie Michen,"

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

which was given to her by the Crown Princess and by her numerous other nieces.

Before entering on a description of the Grand Duke Cyril, I would recall an anecdote which I recently heard. It is the story of a European journalist who was imprudent enough to write, during his first stay in New York, that all the women in the United States looked like queens and were treated as such, but that the equivalent could not be said of the men of that country. Next morning he received a deputation of three young athletes, citizens of the United States, as handsome as Apollo, who said to him in chorus, "We don't want to look like Kings!" And each of them gave him the name of one European monarch to whom he preferred not to bear any likeness.

Any young man of any country might have been proud to resemble the Grand Duke Cyril. He exceeded in beauty the statues of antiquity. In admiration of his classical features, his cousins, Marie of Rumania and her three sisters, the four Princesses of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, had nicknamed him "the marble man." It was the eldest of them, Marie, who first told me the marvelous story of love and war which made of him in my childish eyes an incontestable hero. Later on, when experience of life came to me as it does to all of us, I might have been somewhat less certain as to the merits of the Grand Duke after I had heard his



character severely criticized, both before and after the Russian Revolution, by more than one person in his country and in other countries, who were endeavoring to shake him from his pedestal.

But it is my first impression, in all its fresh and youthful sincerity, that I want to review now; and who knows if youthful sympathy has not a better insight into character than jealousy, fear, or self-interest?

Every summer Princess Marie of Rumania left her residence at Sinaïa to spend some weeks in Germany at her mother's home at Tegernsee, near Munich. The Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, born Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, had found after her widowhood a peaceful summer retreat on the shores of this little Bavarian lake. She gathered around her her four beautiful and high-spirited daughters in an atmosphere of gayety and homeliness, not deprived of grandeur, as I experienced for myself some years later during a brief visit I made there after my marriage.

Tegernsee was for the Princess Marie and her favorite sister, the Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt, a well-loved holiday, as it represented for them freedom from their small courts and tiresome court etiquette. Above all they loved being together, under their mother's autocratic but kindly government, as in the not very distant but yet past days of their happy girlhood. "Sister Sanda," now

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, and "Sister Baby," the future Infanta of Spain, were also of the family party. But the two inseparables were the two eldest, the Crown Princess of Rumania and the Grand Duchess of Hesse; "Maddy," and "Ducky," by their pet names. Their beauty—one so fair, the other so dark—far from causing rivalry, seemed to complement each other by the spell of magnificent contrast.

For that reason, also, they liked to appear together in public, and they used to enter the ball-room arm in arm at *fêtes* which were given for them in Bucharest soon after their marriages. I was too young then to take part in these festivities, but I remember with what admiration my parents spoke of the fancy dress balls given then at the court, when the Crown Princess and the Grand Duchess appeared, one dressed as a white lily, all clearness and candor, and the other, dark and beautiful, as a red lily. On a similar occasion, the two princesses made their entry, one clad as the sun, all gold, matching her golden hair, and the other in the blue and silver of the moon, both equally dazzling and enchanting the spectators.

I remember having often contemplated their photographs in these costumes. In spite of the change in æsthetics brought about by fashion in figures and hairdressing, they were still beautiful to me in the light of my early dreams.

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

After this short and brilliant period a rumor was heard of dissensions in the grand-ducal household, and Victoria Melita, dear "Sister Ducky," confided her troubles to her sister by letter only and ceased for a time her visits to the court of Rumania.

It was about this time, after the return of the Crown Princess from Tegernsee, that I became aware of the existence of the Russian cousins, the sons of "Uncle Vladimir" and "Auntie Michen." From her last holiday at Tegernsee, the Crown Princess brought back numerous snapshots she had taken, which she allowed me to look at.

The three grand dukes, Cyril, Boris, and Andrew, played a great part in the amusements which the camera had immortalized. They frequently visited their aunt at Tegernsee, and then the whole party went to Darmstadt on a visit to the Grand Duchess Victoria Melita. There also came as a guest their other first cousin, the Czar Nicholas II, and his consort, Alexandra Feodorovna, the sister of the Grand Duke Ernest of Hesse and, in consequence, the sister-in-law of Victoria Melita.

I still remember how vividly interested I was in turning over the leaves of the albums of snapshots the Princess Marie had taken during this happy holiday. For each picture she gave me all the explanations I wanted. What fun it was to see the Emperor of all the Russias playing about like a boy in the midst of his family. The children, the

dogs, the horses—I knew them all by name, and I could see them disporting themselves at liberty under the sheltering trees of the park during those short holidays snatched from the strenuous life of one of the most powerful monarchs in the world. Many of these photographs showed the Emperor Nicholas and his cousins in the most comical postures, making fun of one another. In one photograph the Emperor was sitting in the perambulator of his youngest daughter, laughing heartily, his legs sticking out, while one of his cousins held a bunch of grapes above his head just out of his reach. Another snapshot showed the grinning faces of all the men guests peering between the bars of the balustrade on the terrace of the castle at Darmstadt. Here were all the protagonists of the future tragedy—the Grand Duke of Hesse, the Grand Duke Boris of Russia, the Czar, the Grand Duke Andrew, and then another. This last face attracted my attention. It was neither grinning nor laughing; it was a calm, beautiful face wearing a somewhat sad expression.

“Who is he?” I asked the Crown Princess.

“That is the marble man,” she said; “my cousin, the Grand Duke Cyril of Russia. We call him that because he is very handsome and also very impassive.”

That was the first time I had heard the Grand Duke Cyril mentioned. By degrees I became inter-

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

ested in him. I saw him in several family groups wearing his naval uniform, tall, slender—a Greek god. As I asked more and more questions about him, his story was finally told to me. He had been loved since his boyhood by his cousin, Victoria Melita, whom he loved in return. But the laws of the Orthodox Church forbade marriage between first cousins. Since the Russian expression for “first cousin” is “brother of brother,” or “sister of brother,” it is easy to understand why the prejudice is so strong against this kind of marriage. The obstacles seemed insurmountable to the parents of the young people, and they had to obey.

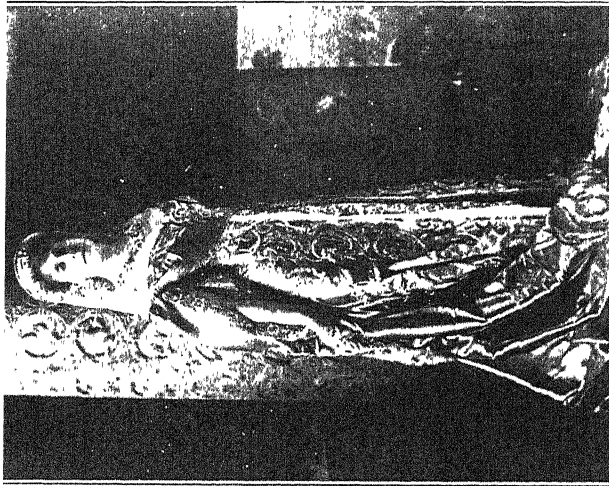
For political reasons Princess Victoria Melita then became engaged to the reigning Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, who also was her first cousin on her father's side, both having a common grandmother in Queen Victoria. But by chance he was a Protestant like herself, and the laws of the Protestant Church did not forbid them to marry. In spite of this cruel paradox, which prevented her marrying the cousin she loved and allowed her to wed the cousin she did not love, Victoria Melita continued to care for Cyril and he for her. A great and tragic event was to reveal their eternal love for each other. When the Russo-Japanese War broke out, the Grand Duke Cyril sailed as officer on the *Petrovsk*, the Admiral's flagship. Unfortunately the vessel was blown up at the Battle of

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

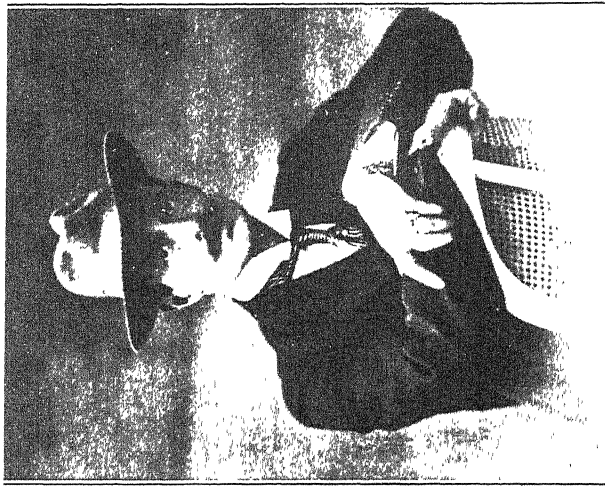
Port Arthur. The news of the disaster reached Europe without any details.

For two days Victoria Melita believed that Cyril was dead, and her despair knew no bounds. It was after she heard of his miraculous escape that she made up her mind to renounce the grand-ducal throne of Hesse, separate from her husband, and consecrate her life to the man she loved, whatever the consequences might be. It seemed to her that God Himself had saved her beloved, who, in the midst of that frightful wreck, had found a floating spar to which he clung until he was picked up by a boat, while hundreds of other men had been drowned. She retired to her mother's castle at Coburg, and when Cyril returned from the War he found her there.

She had not long to wait for the consequences of her act: reprobation, opposition, suppression of allowance. Queen Victoria, the grandmother of the separated couple of Hesse-Darmstadt, had never admitted divorce on principle. The English court, faithful to the old Queen's ideas, refused to admit it either. As for the Russian court, it was different. There divorce was allowed, several grand dukes having married divorced women. But in this particular case there was the question of relationship. The absolute intolerance of the Russian Church, which had first prevented Cyril and Victoria Melita from being happy together, was the official reason given



THE GRAND DUCHESS VICTORIA  
AS WIFE OF GRAND DUKE CYRIL, IN RUSSIAN  
COURT DRESS, AFTER THEIR RECON-  
CILIATION WITH THE CZAR. 1913



THE GRAND DUKE CYRIL

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

for the reprobation, but there was another key to the situation. The Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, sister of the Grand Duke of Hesse, could not forgive her former sister-in-law for having abandoned Darmstadt, the home of her family, the whole tradition, and gravely offended Grand Duke Ernest in his pride as a German Prince. Help and protection the two lovers found nowhere except at Tegernsee, from the Dowager Duchess. She was an intelligent and proud old lady with a warm and ambitious heart for her children; and besides that, she was Russian and knew the secrets of her people, the Romanoffs.

As in the operas and fairy tales, love ended by triumphing over every obstacle. In October, 1905, in spite of the strong opposition of the courts of Russia and Germany, and the manifest displeasure of the court of England, His Imperial Highness, the Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovitch, married his first cousin, Victoria Melita, the divorced Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt. The *Almanach de Gotha* registered the bare fact.

The bride had abjured the Protestant religion in favor of the Orthodox Church, and taken, in consequence, the name of Victoria Feodorovna. Her conversion had been facilitated by her love, which helped her to share the beliefs of the man she adored. Besides, it was also her mother's religion. The conversion had been advised by the far-seeing



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Dowager Duchess, who knew many secrets about the Russian court of which others were ignorant. The religious ceremony took place in the Duchess of Coburg's private chapel at Tegernsee, and the benediction was given by the Orthodox priest, her own chaplain.

This union, so long hoped for by the newly married pair, was considered no less than a crime by the Czar Nicholas II, who acted not only as chief of the Romanoff family and as Emperor, but also in his capacity as supreme head of the church and head of the army and navy. His verdict brought immediate chastisement. One can hardly imagine to-day what the disapproval of an autocrat meant in Russia to a member of the imperial family. First, the culprit's position was ruined. The Grand Duke was a naval officer, and the long list of his military and naval titles, honorary and other, filled nearly a whole page of the *Almanach de Gotha*. He was deprived of his commands, both effective and honorary. He ceased to be aide-de-camp to the Emperor and captain in the navy, commanding a cruiser; he ceased to be the chief of the Seventy-second Regiment of Infantry of Vilna, *à la suite* of the regiment of the Preobrajinski Guard. He ceased to be colonel of the regiment of Dragoons of the Guard, of the Imperial Marines, and so on. Then he was ruined materially. He ceased to receive his allowance as a member of the imperial family. His

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

appanage was crossed off the big book. His duties and his honors could be taken from him, but nothing could alter the fact that he was the first cousin of the Emperor of all the Russias, and, failing the Emperor's only son and only brother, the heir apparent to the throne.

His aunt, who had now become his mother-in-law, perhaps reckoned on the known fragility of the two lives which came between him and the throne when she gave her help and protection to the second husband of her daughter. Exiled from Russia, poor and discredited, the young wedded pair made their home in Paris.

In 1907 we heard that the Grand Duke Cyril and his wife intended to come to Rumania on a visit to their sister and sister-in-law, the Crown Princess Marie. The news made me as happy as if I had heard I was to see Tristram and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet, or Elsa and Lohengrin in the flesh. They reached Rumania in the beautiful month of May, and I saw them for the first time, as all true lovers and heroes of romance should be seen, in the moonlight, in the heart of the forest. The Crown Princess of Rumania had arranged a picnic in the woods that surrounded Bucharest, and the guests went there, some on horseback and others by car. In a clearing in the woods, lighted by lanterns and the rays of the moon coming through the leaves of the oaks, I found myself in the presence of the Grand

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Duchess Cyril and her husband, "the marble man." She bore in her eyes and in all her person the haughty charm of a beautiful woman who has suffered long. Close beside her sat the Grand Duke in his riding costume. He was as handsome as I had imagined him to be when I contemplated his photographs, and I could well understand how he had inspired a great and faithful love. We sat down on the grass around a white tablecloth where dinner was set, and soon after, before any of the other guests thought of leaving, the Grand Duke and Duchess asked for their car and disappeared.

To this first entertainment, others succeeded, also given in their honor, most of them in the open air, owing to the warmth of the season. In 1907 occurred the jubilee of King Carol, celebrating the fortieth anniversary of his reign. An exhibition had been organized at Bucharest, and the fashion was for society people to dine there every evening, in illuminated and beflagged pavilions, to the sound of Tzigane violins. During a whole week we dined there, night after night, with the royal family and their guests, the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Russia.

We used to wander about the exhibition until late in the evening, visiting the different attractions and even taking part in them. The Crown Princess had a preference for one in particular, and we followed her lead. The whole party used to share the

delights of a marvelous water chute, at that time a new sensation. Every time I embarked, headed for a comic opera catastrophe, my imagination carried me back to that terrible night at Port Arthur, lived through by one of our companions, when the *Petropavlovsk* had sunk. Being in a boat, I pictured to myself that other boat shaken by a furious sea, and the Grand Duke Cyril fighting for his life in the midst of a real catastrophe. Without ever daring to speak to him on the subject of this tragedy in which so much of the prestige of the Russian Empire had disappeared, I could not help thinking of it each time I sailed with him on the water chute, and I kept wondering if the present circumstances ever brought the event back to his remembrance. Was the shipwreck still fresh in his mind? A few days later I received an answer to my unspoken question.

As a rule, "the marble man" was rather taciturn. From him all one got was cold politeness, and nothing more. He seemed to take part in our somewhat foolish amusements more from duty than from pleasure. Several times I had noticed the identical words he used after an evening spent in society, always spoken with the same calm indifference. "Charming *fête*," he used to say, with a bow and a half smile. His one care seemed to be his wife, and the Crown Princess drew my attention to the fact that they were always the first to leave as if

in haste to find themselves alone again. This pleased me, as it seemed the proper frame of mind for a married Tristram and Isolde.

It so happened, when the court left for Sinaïa, the Crown Princess, who wished to show the country to her sister and brother-in-law, asked my husband and me to take them in our car and make the journey by road. We were to stop for luncheon on the way under some very celebrated old walnut trees at a pretty village, Bréaza, which overlooks the valley of the Prahova. Since then I have never passed that place without remembering all that was said under the shade of those old trees. What a tragic meaning coming events were to give to the words then uttered by the Grand Duke Cyril and his wife!

The Grand Duchess took her place in the front of the car near my husband, who was driving. She was expecting a child and feared the shaking of the car caused by the rough roads. The Grand Duke Cyril sat between the Crown Princess and me in the back of the car, and, to my astonishment, when we were out of the town, he pulled out of his coat pocket a blue chiffon veil, such as women used to wear, and covered his face with it. I must confess that this action on the part of a man who had been an officer surprised me considerably.

The Grand Duke then explained that the skin of his face had been injured in the explosion of the

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

*Petrovsk* to such an extent that he had to take precautions to protect it, as ever since it had had a tendency to become painfully inflamed. Seeing the interest I showed in the great danger he had been through, he pulled out his watch and showed it to me. It had fallen into the sea with him when the ship blew up and still bore the visible traces of sea water on its face under the glass, which had not been broken. The most extraordinary thing was that the watch did not stop when it fell into the sea with its owner. The Grand Duke kept it like a mascot, and treasured the evidences of the accident on its enameled face.

I was very much moved by his words. They seemed to have broken the ice between us, and I thought of them all the way in the car. When we arrived at Bréaza for luncheon, we found the table set on the grass under the century-old walnut trees. There were only five at the rustic meal. The beautiful weather, the solitude, the simplicity, invited confidences. The Grand Duke and Grand Duchess spoke of their difficulties with their cousin, the Czar. His Most Imperial Majesty, after two years' reflection, still refused his pardon, they said. They would have to return to Paris and continue life in their little flat in the Avenue Henri-Martin. Except for their holidays, which they spent regularly at Tegernsee with the Duchess of Coburg, there was no place on earth for them to go to. Resi-

dence in Russia was still forbidden to them. They remained outcast, the pretext being that they had married without the permission of the Emperor. All attempts at reconciliation had failed up to now. The combined efforts of "Auntie Michen," the mother of Grand Duke Cyril, and of the Duchess of Coburg, both aunts of Nicholas II, could not prevail against the stern secret hostility of the Empress, once Victoria Melita's sister-in-law.

The private fortune of the Grand Duke was still confiscated; he was still deprived of his commands in the army and navy. As for Victoria Feodorovna, she had been very poor since her divorce. She and her husband had calculated the extent of their income; they had only twenty thousand francs a year to live on, which, for people of their standing, meant complete poverty. Grand Duke Cyril had been brought up exclusively for an officer's career; he had no other profession. And then a child was expected, and if this child should be a son he would be very near the throne.

They continued their complaints, which seemed to me to be well founded. Indeed, the injustice was great, when one considered the fact that other grand dukes had married without the consent of the Emperor: Michael, who spent the winter in Cannes and the summer near London with his morganatic wife, the Countess Torby; Paul, who lived

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

at Neuilly with the Countess of Hohenfelsen, a divorcée and a commoner.

These two Grand Dukes had been exiled from Russia, it is true, but they still possessed their appanages and were able to enjoy their immense wealth in peace and contentment. In the case of Cyril alone there had been confiscation and persecution.

It was inexplicable in view of the fact that the woman he had married was a Princess of the blood royal, a cousin of the Czar on both her mother's and her father's side, the granddaughter of a former emperor of Russia, and granddaughter of the late Queen Victoria. And it was she, his near relative, on whom Nicholas II had chosen to wreak his wrath.

It was she whom he had selected for the most severe punishment, and whom he had treated worse than he had the commoners married to the other Grand Dukes—the Torby and the Hohenfelsen.

The Czar, the supreme head of the Orthodox Church, could have raised the interdiction which forbade marriage between first cousins. And it was in the name of this obsolete religious law that Nicholas II uttered the anathema which condemned them to exile, their marriage to nullity, and almost reduced them to want. Under this pretense of strict adherence to a religious tenet, a woman's vengeance was concealed! The Emperor's weakness of



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

character was well known; he had acted under the fatal influence of the Empress, who felt very bitterly toward the divorced wife of her brother.

But love triumphed. It replaced everything else with them. They had chosen the better part, and it could not be taken from them.

The conversation under the old walnut trees at Bréaza made a profound impression on me and served later to elucidate at least one point in the Russian Revolution which otherwise would have remained obscure to me.

The day after their arrival at Sinaïa the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess Cyril came to spend the day with us at our country place at Posada. We played tennis all day. Then they retired to dress for dinner in the rooms I had had prepared for them. An old housekeeper, who had been in the family for many years, waited on them, and told me later how amazed she had been by the wonderful things in the Grand Duke's dressing case; she had never seen such luxury, such fine linen, such beautiful gold bottles, such a variety of gold boxes, in any man's dressing case. She had also noticed the Grand Duke's delicate white hands. If poverty and privations were to come, they had not yet arrived. I was to remember very vividly these details not so long after, when I heard how the Grand Duke lived during the Russian Revolution.

When we left Sinaïa, we drove our Tristram

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

and Isolde to the frontier of Transylvania, where they were to take the train for Paris. A wonderful moon made of the valley of the Temes the dreamed-of setting for our farewell to the romantic pair. I first saw them in the moonlight of a May night, when the nightingales sang in the deep forest; I took leave of them on a midsummer night, in other forests, and again in the moonlight. I had brought flowers for them. The Grand Duke detached a leaf of verbená from his wife's bouquet; he liked its fragrance. He removed his gloves in order to crush the perfume from the leaf, and in the rays of the moon his pale hand shone like alabaster. Then the train left the station, carrying toward their destiny this man and woman—social reprobates, but still to be envied for their human happiness.

After this short period of intimacy I saw no more of the Grand Duke and Duchess Cyril, except now and then during the few years previous to the Great War. I saw them once in Paris in their little flat in the Avenue Henri-Martin, after the birth of their second daughter, Princess Kyra; then another time in Munich, when they were coming from Tegernsee. Materially their situation had not changed.

It was only on the eve of the Great War that the Emperor Nicholas II yielded to the Grand Duchess Vladimir's solicitations. We heard that her son

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Cyril had at last received permission to return to Russia and to take with him his wife and children. The time for a complete and hearty reconciliation seemed to have passed. Then the War broke out, and for two years I heard nothing of them. The last time I saw the Grand Duchess Cyril, previous to the downfall of the Russian Empire, was at Tsarskoë Selo, at the end of September, 1916, only five months before the Revolution. I was coming from England and passing through Petrograd on my way to take charge of my hospital in Rumania. The Grand Duchess asked me to her mother-in-law's palace. She was then anxious about her sister, Queen Marie. The news from the Rumanian front was bad at that time for those who knew. The help of the Russian army was expected, but the question was: Could and would Russia seriously help Rumania?

I found the Grand Duchess very much concerned and looking tired and sad. She did not conceal her anxiety. Things were going badly for Rumania and also for Russia, it was whispered. The first rumblings of the Revolution could be heard. The unpopularity of the Empress was appalling and increasing daily. This I had also heard in Petrograd, in the embassies and also the fashionable restaurants during the four days I was there. The Grand Duchess told me that she would do her utmost to go and see her sister, Queen Marie, for whom she

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

gave me a letter. Her love for her sister was so strong that she would even face the difficulties and dangers of the long journey. I was to say that she would go to Rumania to bring her sister moral comfort in spite of her health—she was then expecting a third child. I did not see Grand Duke Cyril; he was somewhere on the front commanding his regiment of marines.

The year 1917 brought with it several crushing disasters. The greater part of Rumania, including the capital, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. In March, 1917, when the Russian Empire collapsed, I was interned by the Germans. The following May I was released, and I left for Switzerland with the French nuns who had been working with me in my hospital. We arrived in Switzerland, a neutral country, in the month of June. There we heard more or less trustworthy reports of events in Russia. At the end of the month of August, I received a long-delayed letter from Queen Marie, containing another letter which I was to deliver to her mother, the Duchess of Coburg, then living in Zurich with her youngest daughter, the Infanta of Spain. It was from this Romanoff that I first heard what had happened to the Grand Duke and Duchess Cyril during the awful tempest which had overthrown the throne of the Romanoffs. She said they had had some

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

hopes after the Emperor's abdication; they thought the temporary government would be able to prevent Russia from sinking into the abyss of revolution. Then things had rapidly gone from bad to worse; the massacres had begun. The Grand Duke Paul and his son had been slain. The other Grand Dukes had had to flee for their lives. Cyril and his wife and children were now refugees in Finland, and it was there, in the little town of Borgo, on August 17, 1917, that their son was born. The Duchess shook her wise old head. Who could tell what Providence meant by it all?

Another letter from Queen Marie reached me at the beginning of the year 1918, and was the cause of my returning to Zurich to see the Duchess of Coburg. She then gave me, in order that I could write to the Queen, the latest news she had received from Finland. It was indeed terrible news. It had been impossible to send money there, and Grand Duke Cyril and his wife and children were living in the most abject poverty. They were lodged with their two daughters and infant son in a little wooden house, without comfort of any kind, without neighbors, without help, expecting from day to day to receive the dreaded visit of the Red Guards, who frequently crossed the open frontier from the other side of a frozen lake. From their windows poor Russian fugitives could be seen on the ice of the lake, fleeing from Russia. As they

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

passed, the Red Guards used to shoot at them and many fell just like hares in the snow.

There was no wood to be found, and the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess used to heat themselves by burning broken doors and window frames snatched from abandoned houses. Every day Cyril sawed wood and transported it with his own hands so that his family should not die of cold. When I heard these details I remembered the white hands noticed by our old housekeeper, those hands of a man who had never done any manual labor.

When I went to Paris and then to London, in the month of May, 1919, these towns were full of aristocratic Russian refugees. There was an emigration in Europe, as there had been a century before, but there was a noticeable difference between the French emigration and the Russian. The French emigration had had one pretendant; the Russian emigration had several.

I saw many Russians belonging to the *ancien régime*, in both London and Paris. When I questioned them as to the future of their cause, I received the most contradictory replies. Some upheld as heir to the throne of Russia the Grand Duke Nicholas, the former generalissimo of the Russian armies during the Great War. He was a man of age and experience who had enjoyed for a long time the confidence of the army. Others of the refugees upheld the rights of the young Grand

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Duke Dmitri, seeing in him the strange merit of having taken part in the assassination of Rasputin, which in their eyes secured for him the gratitude of Russia. Other Russians declared to me that the only legitimate heir, according to the existing statutes of the imperial family, was Grand Duke Cyril. As for the Empress Dowager, she could not believe that her son Nicholas II was dead; so for her there was no dynastic question. Around the names of the three Grand Dukes I have mentioned, discussion was rife in the *émigrés'* camp, and each party argued in the Russian fashion, which means endlessly, like people who have the boundless steppes in their mind's eye.

The opponents of Grand Duke Cyril seemed many, and they argued from different points of view. Some reproached him for having joined the revolution in its early stages. They accused him of having flown the red flag on his palace in Petrograd, and of going to the Duma at the head of his regiment of marines, wearing red cockades. In time of revolution red has been the color princes and even monarchs have often had to wear, since the time of Louis XVI and his little son, the Dauphin, who had to appear in public wearing the red cap. Besides, the Rumanian Minister, Mr. Diamandi, who had been a witness of those stormy days in Petrograd, told me that when the Emperor abdicated he had sullenly advised all the members

## THE SHADOW EMPEROR

of his family to give their adherence to the temporary government. In going to the Duma with his regiment, the Grand Duke Cyril had not overstepped the bounds of his sovereign's orders; but whoever tries to give the devil his due in time of revolution is always in the wrong. And wearing the red cockade has never prevented a king's head from falling. Like many other aristocrats before him, Grand Duke Cyril had tried to ride the storm, and he had failed.

Nevertheless, it seemed that Providence did not wish him to perish, either, in the huge shipwreck of the Russian empire. He had reached Finland with his wife and children. Later he settled in France, and now he lives at St. Briac, on the shores of Brittany, where Tristram and Isolde of the legend landed long ago.

Years have passed, during which destiny undertook to simplify the political situation of the Romanoffs. Death has reduced the number of the pretendants to the throne of Russia, which was virtually occupied by Lenin, a more absolute monarch than any czar since the days of Ivan the Terrible. Old Grand Duke Nicholas, the generalissimo, died in the south of France a few months ago. As for Grand Duke Dmitri, he married morganatically a Protestant wife. Nothing nowadays seems less probable than a restoration in Russia, but I have noticed—and who has ever studied history who



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

has not noticed it before me?—that history is only the report of events that have surprised contemporaries so much that they had to write them down just because they seemed so astounding. Ten years before the War, when Lenin, an exile, used to live in poverty-stricken lodgings in Paris or Geneva, who would have imagined him an autocrat in the Kremlin, the absolute master of Russia, and, after his death, his body becoming an object of idolatry? To an impartial observer, it is not more impossible to imagine Cyril at the Kremlin in the future than it would have been in 1909 to imagine Lenin buried in the Kremlin. Nothing is impossible; anything can happen. I neither foresee, nor do I prophesy. I have simply taken pleasure in drawing the silhouette of the man whose legitimate claims allow me to name him the "Shadow Emperor of all the Russias."

## CHAPTER VII

WHEN MICHAEL OF RUMANIA, AGED FIVE,  
BECAME A KING

**T**HAT day, July 20, 1927, began by being a beautiful summer morning, like any other. Michael of Rumania, aged five years, nine months, and five days, woke up as usual, a short time after the birds, a short time after the sun, beneath the kindly look of his Nannie, whom he calls Dadoo, joyfully greeted by Mumbo, his brown and white cocker, in the white nursery of his little wooden house, hidden, like many other little wooden houses, in the great forest of Sinaïa. The only difference between Michael's house and those houses where other little boys like himself live, is that before his house a soldier walks up and down, carrying his gun on his shoulder, a true soldier who stamps with real boots. There is still another difference which is known but not spoken about: in the little house where Michael lives, hidden in the wood, he has been alone with his mother for the last two summers. Other children live with their fathers and mothers; his father has gone away and will not come back. He has gone far away, so far that he is out of sight. But the life

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

of little boys cannot be spent in waiting for their father's return; they no longer speak about him. Michael has become the heir presumptive of the crown of Rumania, in place of his father, Prince Carol, who gave up his rights. But what it means to be heir presumptive, Michael has not the slightest notion.

That day Michael got up as fresh and well as usual. As usual, his mamma came into the room with the morning sun. She came to see if her little boy had awaked cheerily. But to-day she is not laughing; she is looking sad. She has taken Michael on her lap and tells him very seriously, while stroking his beautiful hair, that he must pray for his poor grandfather, who died last night.

Pray for his grandfather, King Ferdinand? Michael is quite willing to do this. He does it every evening; he can also do it, for once, in the morning. That does not seem to affect him much. For a year and a half (and for a child of five years this is a century), Michael has scarcely seen his grandfather, too ill to be approached by a turbulent little boy. He knows nothing of him save that his beard pricked hard when he kissed him on New Year's Day. And now grandpapa is dead. What is it to be dead? The unusual word surprises him a little, but all the same, inspires him with a sort of mistrust.

"What is it to be dead?"

## WHEN MICHAEL BECAME A KING

Before the child's inevitable question the Christian mother does not hesitate.

"It means that grandpapa has gone to heaven."

The child's mind is set at rest. He knows what heaven is. The angels fly to heaven, and so do the aviators. To go to heaven must be very amusing.

While Dadoo is dressing a restored Michael, mamma is obliged to leave the room; they had come to fetch her. Some gentlemen (those called ministers) wished to speak to her. Michael prays for grandpapa, who has gone to heaven, like the flying men whom he saw start one day from the aviation ground at Baneasa and pass above his head, far, far away. . . .

The ministers asked Princess Helen if she had announced to her son that he was King.

"Not yet!" said she to them, in a sort of consternation, "not yet, a little later! I don't wish him to know yet! He is so small! He would not understand!"

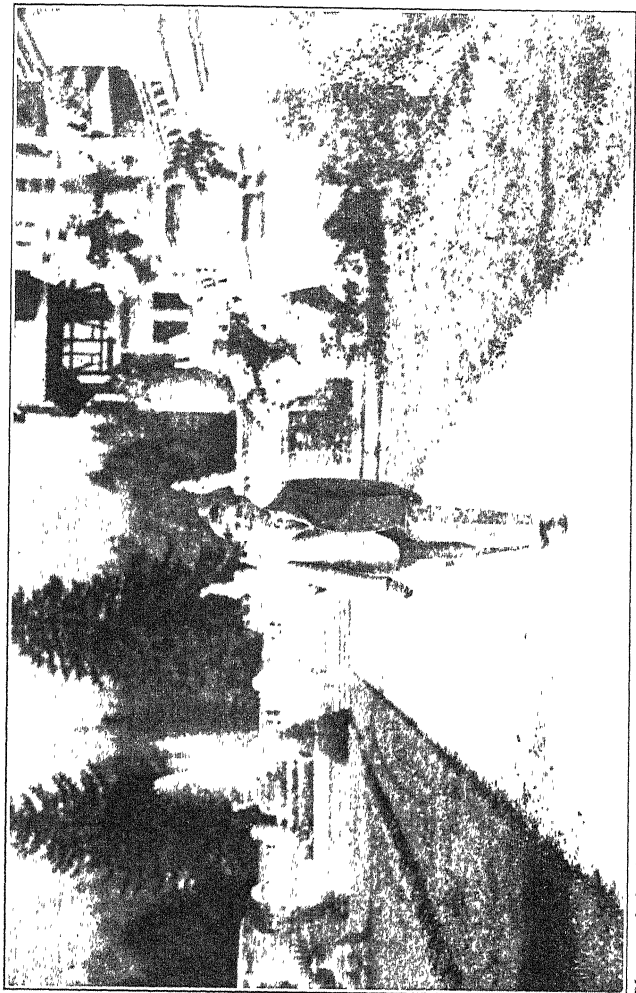
It is the cry of a mother who is trying, before the destiny of her child, the last action of defense, affecting, useless. . . .

During these few hours' respite, during the last preparations before leaving for the capital, before presenting the new King to Parliament, the child must *not* know. Dadoo has received orders to take him for his morning walk as she always did and as

if absolutely *nothing* had happened. They go out in a carriage, drive for an hour, walk for another hour in the woods. When Michael gets into his carriage, the old coachman greets him:

“Good-morning, Your Majesty!”

Michael stops for a moment on the step of the carriage. He raises his nose, curious. Did he hear aright? Dadoo pushes him into the carriage, makes him sit down. She speaks to him about the wild flowers of which they are going to make bouquets, and then about a great secret: strawberries! There are already, perhaps, some wild strawberries in the place they are going to, there where, last year, the very old fern trees were cut down. Dadoo knows the art, so useful to nurses, of diverting children’s attention. The walk pursues its way, peaceful and interesting. They saw butterflies, blue ones, quite small. They even saw a squirrel, sitting on his hind paws, playing with his bushy tail. Then he climbed, as rapid as a flash, up the trunk of the tree, quite straight as if it also were going to heaven! The warblers warble; and in the glade where the great trunks have been thrown down, like columns of gray velvet lying on the moss, there are the strawberries foretold by Dadoo. They are quite red and grow like the bells of the lily-of-the-valley. One can pick and make bunches of them, which can be eaten afterwards. Dadoo looks at her watch; it is already ten o’clock. “Come, we must return!” she



*Photograph by J. Bernant*

KING MICHAEL OF RUMANIA  
1929

## WHEN MICHAEL BECAME A KING

said. Michael thinks only of one thing: of the wild strawberries, the treasure he is carrying. He will give his bunch to mamma. Then he will take Dadoo's bunch and eat it at his lunch. To-morrow they will return and gather others. All things being thus arranged and for the best, Michael, on reaching home, hurries, bounds. He flourishes his edible bunch.

"Is mamma there?"

"No, Your Majesty," answers the chambermaid whom they met in the passage.

The child stopped, amazed. This time he heard very clearly. He retraced his steps, slyly, thoughtfully, entered the dining-room, then the pantry. Nobody. Dadoo had said the strawberries must be washed before being eaten. Michael turns the tap to let the water flow on mamma's bunch that it may be clean before offering it to her. But at the noise of the water, the butler ran in:

"It is not allowed, Your Majesty!"

This time Michael can no longer doubt; he runs to Dadoo and asks her to explain the phenomenon. In reality he is displeased; he feels slightly offended.

"Why have they changed my name? I am called Prince Michael, and everybody this morning calls me otherwise."

Then Dadoo, religiously monarchist, like all English people who respect themselves, rises, and feeling

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

that the great moment has come, suddenly very solemn, decides to explain the fact.

"It is because your grandfather is dead and that to-day you have become King, my darling!"

"King? What does it mean to be a king?" Michael asks.

"It means to be good henceforth every day. It is to give your hand nicely to the gentlemen who will come and see you, instead of hiding yourself behind the furniture, as you usually do. It is to behave well always. . . . It is to be a good boy, a very good boy every day, and all day long."

Michael is much disturbed in his mind.

"May I play any more if I am King?"

"Yes," says Dadoo, "you may play, but not all the time."

While this explanation was going on, his mamma came in. She is dressed all in black. Michael kisses her, and she weeps. He can understand nothing. Why is she weeping? He feels very much inclined to speak to her about the strawberries and the squirrel of the morning and the quite tiny butterflies, but he dares not. It is not natural for grown-ups to weep.

When Michael cries, it is because he has been naughty and has been punished. Before the incomprehensible tears of a mother who is never naughty, Michael is lost in bewilderment. Whoever could have punished her, and why?



## WHEN MICHAEL BECAME A KING

But they don't give him much time to reflect. His train is waiting for him, the train which must take him to his capital.

We must go and hurry up. Dadoo dresses him feverishly, not in his usual clothes, but all in white, a little white silk shirt, some knickers. It is summer . . . at Bucharest it is very hot. Come, we must start.

"Why are we going?" asks Michael, who during the whole day will do nothing but ask questions.

He must go with his mamma to return the visit of these gentlemen of the Parliament.

"What is Parliament?"

"Later," answered his mother, "I will explain that to you, my darling. Now you are still too small; you cannot understand."

Michael can well see, by comparison, what a very small boy he is. When he enters the House, he is the only one of his size among the tall generals, the great dignitaries, all the grown-up people. A child, a mere child, the only child about among hundreds of people! This morning, in the forest, the butterflies, the squirrel, the birds, the strawberries in the moss, were smaller than himself. He was the giant. Now, it is just the contrary; he is smaller than everybody else; he is the dwarf!

His thoughts wander back to the forest while the three Regents are reading aloud the form of the oath which makes him a king. During the whole

ceremony he was very good. At one moment only he was frightened; he hid himself in his mother's gown. It was when all the deputies, senators, standing up, shouted and cheered:

"Long live King Michael the First!"

When leaving the House of Parliament, he said to his mother:

"Mummy, why did they all scream so loud?"

"For you, Michael, to give you pleasure."

"Oh!" said he, "but I don't at all like them to scream. You must tell them that they must never scream like that again for me."

Scarcely had he and his mother got into the beautiful Daumont carriage in which they were to drive in state through the streets of Bucharest than a cannon shot burst and made him start. It was the first shot of the royal salute of a hundred-and-one cannon shots for his accession that the artillerymen were beginning to fire on the hills that command the town. Cannon! That also is another noise which Michael does not like at all. He asks his mother, who is beginning to weep again beneath her black veil, pressing close to her:

"Why are they firing guns all the time?"

"For you, my darling!"

Michael repeats:

"But I don't like that noise either."

And his mother, drawing him close to her, repeats to him again:

## WHEN MICHAEL BECAME A KING

"You cannot understand, my love; you are too young. I will explain all later when you are older."

In front of the Palace, an enormous crowd was standing, waiting for the passing of the little King of five years and his young mother, to greet them. More cheers! He is again startled; his innocence wonders. He wants the crowd to disperse, the passers-by to go as they are wont. All these people in the streets, standing on the pavement, what are they doing? He asks his mother:

"Why are they all there without moving? Have they nothing to do at home?"

All these people are stopping also for him, to give him pleasure. Always for him, always for him, because he is the King!

The charming and pathetic group composed of him and his mother wrings passionate cries from the people. The tears of the Princess redouble. Their wellsprings are numerous, secret, unintermitting, quite near, never failing. Let it suffice to call to the reader's mind that the Princess who, that day, is taking her little son before Parliament to be proclaimed King, is Helen of Greece, the daughter of Constantine, King of Greece, three times exiled and dead in exile; the granddaughter of George the First, King of Greece, assassinated at Salonica; the niece of the dethroned Emperor of Germany; the second cousin of the massacred Czar of Russia; and she will, all her life, be the abandoned wife of Prince

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Carol! Her fear, her anguish, who would not understand before the peril of a throne her son must accede to at the age of five years?

But she herself will protect the soul of her child against the demoralizing complacency of courts, and against the misfortune of power inherited too young. From the first day, Princess Helen pronounced that admirable word:

"I have explained to him that the words 'Your Majesty' is just a nickname like any other."

Michael will be brought up exactly like other well-bred little boys of five or six. He lives as they do, works like them, gardening, helped by a cousin of his own age, little Prince Philip of Greece. He is beginning to learn the work of a gardener, waters the trees, splashes about, and runs freely in the forest of Sinaïa, accompanied by Mumbo, his brown and white cocker, and always followed by his faithful Dadoo.

More than a year has already gone by since the twentieth of July, 1927, when Michael became what he cannot even yet understand: a King.

Thanks to the intelligent education his mother gives him, Michael has remained a simple and joyous child, carefully kept away from flatterers.

He gave a proof of his charming simplicity of heart, of his precious childish candor, which has remained intact, on the occasion of his first official

## WHEN MICHAEL BECAME A KING

voyage on the Danube, going with his mother from Turnu-Severin to the Delta, in June, 1928.

Arriving on board the royal yacht, he noticed the unusual length of the flag which was waving at the stern of the yacht. This flag was so long that it trailed in the water, and the child was afraid it would be spoiled. Michael, leaning over the railing, asked why this flag was so large, larger than all the others.

The General, his aide-de-camp, then replied:

"Sire, it is because this is *your* flag and it decorates *your* vessel."

Michael burst out laughing:

"I, who am so very small! I don't want such a large flag. I shall go and tell the captain so."

The idea of his supremacy, of his absolutely unmerited greatness, the most baneful and the most pernicious of ideas which can pass over a human brain, has been spared him up to now. This child has not been told what Cardinal de Fleury was guilty and foolish enough to tell another child who began, like him, his reign at the age of five years, Louis XV, King of France. Showing the large crowd gathered under the royal balcony at Versailles, the Cardinal said:

"Sire, all these people belong to you!"

The misfortune of Louis XV, in the midst of the most brilliant court of Europe, was to be orphaned of both father and mother. A sweet mother did

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

not shelter his heart, did not think first about the salvation of his soul. To this other royal child, Michael I of Rumania, whom a hard destiny deprived of the leadership of a father, it will be said by the gentle voice of his mother, not that the people belong to him, but that *he belongs* to his people.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN: HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH, PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND

IF it falls upon me to meditate and perhaps to make others reflect upon the life and the death of Herbert Henry Asquith, who was Prime Minister of England at the hour when the English people of the five parts of the world consented to enter into the War and passed from the state of a peaceful empire to that of an empire in storm, I owe it to the chance of a marriage in the family, that of my cousin Antoine Bibesco with Elizabeth Asquith. This made me, during the last nine years of the Ex-Prime Minister's life, first, his relative by connection, then his intellectual ally, and in a way the partisan of this disinherited chief, of this political star already more than half submerged below the horizon of the great country which he had governed so long.

I made the acquaintance of Mr. Asquith in the month of May, 1919, when he was at the lowest point of his long political career, some weeks after his defeat in the general elections of 1919, which preceded by a short time only the meeting of the

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

conference from which emerged the Treaty of Versailles. What I knew of him before this time was what everybody knew—which means very little.

I knew, of course, that he was a great Parliamentary orator, the chief of the Liberal Party, that he had been a minister under Queen Victoria, under Edward VII, under King George, and during eight years and eight months without interruption, Prime Minister. I knew also that he was the master at Downing Street and, according to the British Constitution, the principal agent responsible for the decision of the fourth of August, 1914, when the British Cabinet had thrown in the face of the world, the sky, and the sea its sober defiance: "A state of war exists between Great Britain and Germany from this day from eleven o'clock P.M."

It was well said, but in the opinion of many of the French people it should have been said sooner.

"Wait and see" had been the motto, during the following two years, of the statesman who presided over the destinies of England engaged in mortal strife, and during these two years his long patience had seen Mons and Charleroi; the army of Sir John French broken up, the flower of English youth wiped out, his eldest son Raymond killed in action with so many other eldest sons, his second son badly wounded, and the ruins, and the burning towns, and the wrecks of numbers of gal-



## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

lant ships, even to that which carried Lord Kitchener and his fortune.

Then, as if Destiny were tired of his long patience, I heard of his fall from office at the end of the year 1916. One of his ministers, Mr. Lloyd George, had replaced him at the head of affairs.

I remember the event had at the time a curious psychological effect over me. The fall of the Asquith Cabinet and that of the Briand Ministry had followed the defeat of Rumania very closely, and it was commonly believed that their fall could be attributed to this defeat.

Far away in my small country, in my hospital overcrowded with wounded, in Bucharest, capitulating under the long-range guns, I was rejoicing to think that a new order of things had arisen for Europe.

How many times my poor country had been invaded in the course of centuries without in the least disturbing in their serenity the distant gods of Downing Street! In blood and tears European solidarity was to be founded, since, at the announcement of the fall of a capital, small and far away, great ministers also fell in London and in Paris.

These were the ideas which the name of Asquith awakened in me, and I had no reason to reflect further on the fate of this statesman, fortunate or

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

unfortunate, when, two years later, a conversation enlightened me and put me suddenly in a position to know him.

In the first days of May I made a short stay in Paris, before going to London to be present at the marriage of our cousin with Elizabeth Asquith.

It was after one of those luncheons of celebrated men, in the tradition of Monsieur de Talleyrand, that I had picked up the first disenchanted rumors of the congress that was just finishing.

This day Italy had abandoned the green table. It was a time of retreats. America retired from Mr. Wilson; France withdrew from Monsieur Clemenceau; confidence and credit had fled.

Keynes, that reviled and yet redoubtable magician, had at last published his statistics, and disillusion reigned. Then, in a group of augurs seated round an ash-tray, I heard for the first time the accusation of ignorance brought against Mr. Lloyd George. It was made by an Ambassador, master of himself and of his words: "Mr. Lloyd George can do more than he knows he can, but unfortunately he knows nothing." His interlocutor, an Englishman, replied by these words which, from his disdainful lips, were almost a term of opprobrium: "Mr. Lloyd George is not an Englishman." Then, turning to me, he added: "When you go to London you will see a real Englishman, Asquith. He knows

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

how to read. He is a great scholar; he would have given us a sensible peace."

English—no one could be more so than Herbert Henry Asquith. Everything in him—the depth, the form, the tone, the heredity without alloy—belonged to old England. He enchanted by the quality which, in terms of breeding, is called thoroughbred.

Tall but square, impressive but jovial, strong-limbed, and subtle in his smile; sometimes I imagined him wearing the pointed crown of the Saxon kings and sometimes the black felt of the Roundheads.

The first time I saw Mr. Asquith was at luncheon at his house in Cavendish Square, and he caused me two surprises. This orator was a silent man; this leader of empire was a shy man. Sitting beside him at his table, I had the impression at first that he was grateful to me for observing and sharing his silence.

At the other end of the long table, Margot Asquith, justly celebrated for her wit and her engaging conversation, sufficed to animate the debate. She shone; she dazzled; she attacked daringly every burning subject.

"How invaluable such a wife must be for such a man," I thought, looking at them both.

This luncheon invitation, accepted by us on our arrival at Victoria Station, was to be without ceremony. But a private party at the Asquiths was

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

not what a stranger might suppose it would be.

The King of Portugal, the Ambassador of Spain, with the Ambassadors and a number of people, Liberal members, an ex-Minister, private secretaries, and men from the Foreign Office were guests at this luncheon, which had been announced to us as being quite intimate.

All the same, the interests of the company differed greatly from those of a similar gathering on the other side of the Channel. Of the Peace there was no question; just as there was no curiosity about it in the newspapers.

England is a family absorbed in its domestic affairs, and a bill on beer and the Bibesco-Asquith marriage filled the pages of the newspapers which I bought in Dover.

As soon as one touches the soil of England the Continent recedes. I knew this peculiarity, and also I had been informed that Mr. Asquith considered any man or woman who permitted himself or herself to speak of politics at his table as altogether devoid of both heart and imagination.

Our conversation began in this way: on his side, by a little snuffle, a sort of drawing in of a deep breath, which was the prelude to the conversation of a timid man: "Do you know Spain?"

A strange look, at the same time direct and furtive, accompanied the question. Because I knew

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

that country, he no longer feared to give me his impressions; he simply awakened mine.

He reconstructed the towns without effort, in a low voice, in short, balanced phrases. I knew that he had left London a few days after his defeat in the East Fife elections, and I admired him for having chosen as diversion from his worries the journey to Spain, dear to romantics, and that he should have been impassioned to the point of being able to give, on his return, this marvelous description, this fleeting *chef d'œuvre*, designed for the amusement of a stranger in his house. On rising from the table I was dazzled as by the sun.

It rained when we came out of St. Margaret's after the celebration of the wedding. The first carriage which stood before the porch, after that of the bride and bridegroom and that of Queen Alexandra had gone, was his. He took me by the arm and made me get in quickly to escape the rain and the crowd.

Mrs. Asquith and two of the bridesmaids, young bacchantes, wearing on their heads bunches of grapes and dressed in gauze, joined us quickly, and the carriage moved on. Then, from the crowd massed before St. Margaret's, a great cheer arose. The man in the street saluted the old chief on this day of paternal emotion. Not once during the long drive to Cavendish Square did I dare to lift my eyes to him.

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

My father also, whom I had lost, had wept on the day of my marriage, and the remembrance of those manly, stealthily shed tears, coming from a strong-minded man, was perhaps the beginning of the warm feeling which attached me ever afterwards to Mr. Asquith; his great sorrows had not made him insensitive.

I was invited to spend at the Wharf, the country house of the Asquiths, just out of Oxford, the first Sunday which followed the marriage of their daughter Elizabeth. The Wharf is not a castle; it is not even an ordinary country house. The Wharf is a village which belongs to the Asquith tribe.

It is composed of several cottages, the father's house being an ancient mill; that of Mrs. Asquith belonging formerly to the ferryman; the old presbytery serving as a lodging for the eldest daughter, her husband and children. The one-time public house of the village is now the house of the son, Anthony Asquith, and his friends. It is here that they meet for meals, for bridge, for conversation and society games.

The Thames, the illustrious river, at this point still narrow and twisting, unites in its windings this little hamlet of comedy. I have always thought that the English countryside had something of a dream-like quality, but nowhere more vividly than at the Wharf have I felt myself the plaything of that dream.



A FAMILY GROUP AT THE WHARF

PRINCE ANTOINE BIBESCO, THE HON. ANTHONY ASQUITH, LADY OXFORD.

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

I enter the mill one Sunday before midday, as one enters a mill, freely as the pigeons which feed on the grass under the cedar tree, and I find the miller reading in his armchair.

He is reading Horace in a little old edition brought from Spain. Over his shoulder I see this line of the Latin poet, marked by a nail: *Delirant reges plectuntur Achivi*. This is the quotation I found later on, one day, in his book, *The Genesis of the War*, in the chapter dealing with Kaiser William II.

While he arranges his spectacles, I inspect the cupboards, full of good flour, the shelves, full of honey, which cover the sides of his study, or I find the Greek and Latin authors, the classics in all their forms, the old French and English writers, and also the modern. All is grist that comes to this mill.

One reads here something of everything—novels, books of travel, and even detective stories. The host confessed his appetite for reading, ever renewed, which has never declined since his young days. It is always the same appetite that he comes to satisfy at the mill, every free Sunday.

He tells me that every year he rereads Scott and Dickens. I see on his table the *Troādes*, commonly called *The Trojan Women*, of Euripides, translated by the great English scholar, Professor Murray.



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Gilbert Murray is his friend, his neighbor. "I will make you acquainted," he said to me, "if you will come with me to Oxford this afternoon." It was in this way that I learned the good news. Friends of the family had told me that Mr. Asquith went to Oxford nearly every Sunday, but that he took with him only those whom he believed worthy.

To visit Oxford for the first time with Mr. Asquith was a little as if I had visited Combourg with Chateaubriand, or Weimar with Goethe. His memory dated from there; his youth had blossomed in these fields; he had received there the angelic salutation of glory sweeter than glory itself; he had tasted the first transports of speech and the unprecedented scholastic triumph which marked the dawn of his great renown. Athenian of the English Portique, there was a preëstablished harmony between his town monitress and himself.

After having driven about twelve kilometers in a country of pastures, golden with buttercups and backed by low, wooded hills, and after having saluted the fugitive apparition of the Thames, twenty times lost and twenty times seen again at a turn of the landscape, we arrived at Oxford toward the close of a beautiful day in May. Professor Murray, the pretext for our excursion, was not to be found.

It was to Balliol, his college, that Mr. Asquith first conducted me. We made a short pause at the

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

Fountain of Martyrs, a little orison in the chapel, where my companion confided to me the name of the foundress, the Lady Dervorguila, who founded it in 1262, that my piety might know to whom we were indebted; then we penetrated into this world, separated from the world, into this school for angelic-looking youths, which is a college of Oxford. We wandered a long time in the green courts and in those somber halls where the setting sun drew from the ancient libraries the sighs and cracks of the old woodwork. We loitered on the stone stairs and in the inner courts where English ivy grows, that ivy which has not its equal in Europe because no invader has disturbed its growth for nine hundred years.

A phantom followed us in our dreamy investigations. It was that of a young man of Morley, in the county of Yorkshire, the second son of Joseph Dixon Asquith, who had prepared here for his vocation of lawyer and had awakened the echoes of these somber halls fifty years ago. We wandered thus, always speaking of him, for he continued to follow us, until we reached the great dining hall. Silent servants placed the dinner service on the long oak tables, the same old service of silver, the silent servants as of old. Mr. Asquith showed me, with a sign, the place which the young man from Morley had occupied in that time long past.

In front of us on the black wainscoting, above

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

the dons' table, higher by a degree than those of the students, I saw a series of portraits, the celebrities of the college. In frilled ruff, a minister of Elizabeth, one of Charles II in a wig, Cardinal Manning all in red, Robert Browning, Swinburne—in fact all those who, formed in the mold of wisdom of Balliol, went forth thence for the advantage, the prosperity, and the good renown of England. Among these famous men was one face with tight-shut lips which I began to like.

"Do you know that old gentleman over there?" my companion asked, sniffing a little and lifting his broad shoulders slightly. From the place at the table which was that of the young phantom, one can see the portrait of Herbert Henry Asquith amid the other illustrious men of Balliol.

When we left the old college another young shadow that I had not yet remarked joined us in the great courtyard, under the arch of the postern, where there is a long list of names carved in the stone. With a finger which, in the twilight, seemed to me uncertain, Mr. Asquith followed the long alphabetical column; at the head of "Fellows Killed in the Great War," at the letter "A" came the name of Asquith—Raymond—the son of his youth. All his sons, like himself, had gone first from Oxford and had been for him the living proof that he was what, in his proud modesty, he believed himself to

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

be, *vir Britannicus*—this and no more; not the man of genius, the giant, the exception, but simply an Englishman, the best Englishman possible, a product which the race keeps always in reserve for the days of adversity.

His first-born, Raymond, had equalled him in his university triumphs. At twenty-five years of age he had carried off from Balliol the same victories. Then he died, face to the enemy, in that war for which he, Herbert Henry Asquith, had assumed the responsibility before God and before the British people.

And toward the end of the year 1916, with everything going from bad to worse for the Allies as it was bound to do because they could not wait until the innocent were armed like the guilty, because it took time for right to become might, when the press and the Opposition accused him of taking the War too patiently, he who knew that no English Minister could take it otherwise, he fell from power.

What mattered it to him that the press and his political enemies were leagued with his friends? At this same time his son, Arthur, wounded at Gallipoli, who is to-day General Asquith, insisted on being operated on without an anæsthetic because there was not enough ether for everybody, in the improvised hospital. The great number, the ignorant, the democracies are never stoic, but the educated,

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

the man trained in Balliol must be. I am not far from thinking that the humaneness in the Asquith family produced something a little superhuman. It is to-day, in the light of his death, that I place them together, his sons and himself, in retracing in thought the Oxford road which was for them all the road of the great school for heroism and self-control.

Never do they think at the Wharf of Raymond as gone; they speak of him as of a person living. He was for the whole family a source of citations, of anecdotes; they quoted from his satiric verses written in the vein of Swift. All agree he was the handsomest of the Asquiths, the most witty and amusing, too.

Julian, son of Raymond, familiarly called Trim, an infant at the time of his father's death, took rank in the family functions immediately after his grandfather, as is the custom in English homes, and to-day, at the age of twelve, he is the Earl of Oxford and Asquith.

I owe it to the memory of Mr. Asquith to say that I have never heard him pronounce before me the name of Lloyd George. What I know of their disagreement I have learned from others, and the conflict of their two characters is already a thing historic. Mr. Asquith's reserve inspired in me too much respect for me ever to attempt to lead to

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

this subject conversations that became more and more confidential and that enchanted me.

All the visitors at the Wharf passed their time exactly as they wished. At the table the mistress of the house often asked her guests what they had made of the morning. One day when she asked me this question I replied: "I have been to Rome this morning."

They all exclaimed except Mr. Asquith, who smiled. What I said was true in a manner. I had made the journey to Rome, because, having encountered Mr. Asquith during my walk on the bank of the Thames, he had accompanied me to a mossy seat, and there by a chance quotation from Montaigne, the word "Tiber" came to the surface and he spoke to me of a visit he had made to Rome, in terms so beautiful, so true, and so varied that I had the feeling of breathing the air of the eternal hills.

Very soon after we made a real journey together, and this was in Italy. In the month of September of that year I met the Asquiths and my Bibesco cousins in Venice, at the Da Mula Palace, and during that time we went to Ravenna. Leaving the banks of the Brenta in an automobile we visited Padua and Ferrara on the way.

The contact with Italy, direct or indirect, produces always in the spirit of cultured English people a kind of illumination. Byron and Shelley, after

Shakespeare, are the proofs, with many others. Never did I hear more beautiful verses than those spoken by the voice of him of whom they had said to me: "He knows how to read."

Often he put questions to us, to his children and to me, to see how much we knew, or better to measure our ignorance, and he gave the replies. Above all, he wished us to know the correct names. Thus at Padua, of this Gattamelata, the *condottiere* whom his daughter, to tease him, always called Gautemala, he, taking it up, pronounced the metallic syllables with a sort of voluptuousness.

The animated erudition of Mr. Asquith transformed our stay in Ravenna into a true feast of imagination. He knew how to tell us, at San Apollinare, what passage of scripture justified the attitudes of the beautiful young men and the virgins of the mosaic, who all inclined gracefully to the same side, bowing to the Christ, like young palm trees bowed by the wind. These were the tender martyrs of whom it is written: "They will play with their palms and their beautiful crowns."

At the tomb of Galla Placidia, an empress who was daughter, sister, wife, and mother of emperors, he recounted to us the possible and probable life of the inhabitant of the Blue Grotto.

We returned to Venice and I was full of admiration for all I had learned from him in so few days, but before our departure I had occasion to realize

again the extent of his modesty. The day before we were to part, they to go back to London, I to Rumania, Mr. Asquith took me on a visit to the palace of the Queen of Cyprus, near that Casa dei Spiriti which Byron haunted, to see an amiable couple who possessed, and deserved to possess, the most beautiful garden of Venice.

Some English warships, among them the Admiral's flagship, had cast anchor the day before off St. George Majiolo. It happened that the Admiral was visiting the Contarini Palace at the same time as we were. On landing, we found on the quay three sailors of the English fleet, who were guarding his dinghy. These men were occupied in watching some urchins who were giving a bath to a little dog in the canal.

When the old gentleman who accompanied me was passing over the planks one of the sailors lifted his head, looked at him, and recognized him. At the same moment the two others did the same; they drew themselves up to salute. It was rapid; it was at the same time simple and prodigiously solemn.

I saw Mr. Asquith raise a trembling hand to his hat and blush. He was no longer Prime Minister, he was not even member for East Fife, but he was always a great British symbol, and he did not know it.



## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

The following year, in the by-election at Paisley in Scotland, he was elected and took his seat again in Parliament. He had just refused a peerage, preferring to remain a commoner, following the tradition of Fox and Gladstone.

When I went again to London the following spring to be present at the baptism of Priscilla, his grandchild, I had the opportunity of hearing him speak in the House of Commons. I understood then what gave force to his words. Inspired by classic genius and aided by the study of the ancients, he possessed the secret of awakening insensibly the light in the minds of those who listened to him. I said to myself: "Here is the man whom the electors of East Fife have prevented from contributing to the peace of the world!" I had gone to the House of Commons to be made an unbeliever in the parliamentary system. The *Observer* wrote of him the next day: "His judgments are straight as a Roman road." Since his fall, the Commons had never heard anything so fine as his speech. They heard him again on the seventeenth of January, 1924, when his decisive word took the power from the Conservatives and conferred it upon the Labour Party. In refusing power for his party, in numbers the weaker, he had disappointed all those who had offered him Conservative support. At his age, this was to lose his last chance of becoming Prime Minister again.

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

He explained his attitude with a magnificence of expression in proportion to the greatness of the sacrifice. He had saved the principle; he had brought back his party to the straight path; he had followed the divine rules of the game which had permitted the establishment of English power.

I remained some days at the Wharf in the beginning of this year 1924. During the long winter evenings, after walks in the country, more austere now, but more beautiful even than in May, when the spires of the Gothic churches could be seen from farther away, when the bells could be heard at infinite distances, he began for the first time to mix politics with our talks.

He made me read his first speech in the Commons, the most famous, also his speeches on liberalism, on free trade, on the House of Lords and the budget. He explained the position he had recently taken; in refusing the power, he leaned on the tradition of the great party of which he was the chief, the only vicar, notwithstanding the schism which, since 1916, had split up the Liberal majorities and made them vanish like snow in the sun.

Brought up, as I had been, in the contrary tradition among the Tories of my country—all the parties of the Right are alike, be it only in their faults—I listened with great curiosity of mind to the explanation of the other truth.

But where I followed him perfectly was when

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

he explained to me the necessity for a clearly-defined position, and his horror of the confusion of ethics in matters of government. Once again he led me up to the serene heights where art and politics meet; we found there Fox, Pitt, Lord Palmerston.

On returning from our walk we passed before the little church of Sutton Courtney. He interrupted himself to point out to me its entrance porch, which began by being Norman and changed in the middle to Gothic. He saw there the image of evolution without destruction.

He loved the church of his village. When he disappeared discreetly from his guests on Sunday after tea, it was to return alone to his seat in church and to read the Bible to the assembled parishioners.

One winter's night I slipped out after him and heard him read the Sunday lesson to a handful of small Berkshire farmers with that voice which had caused thrones to tremble.

A year had not passed when the new elections brought defeat to the Labour Party and called back the Conservatives to power. This time Mr. Asquith was blamed by his party for having headed straight for the storm when he could have guided them peacefully to port by a coalition with the Conserva-

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

tives. He was abandoned by his Paisley electors for having preferred omission to compromise.

After this fall, which he judged irreparable, he did as he had done after his great defeat in 1919—he traveled. I saw him in Paris with his son Arthur, General Asquith, when they left for Egypt and Palestine in November, 1924. We passed a day together on the Ile St. Louis and we visited Notre-Dame and the other Gothic churches near. I knew that during his pilgrimage in the countries of the Bible he was going to make a grave decision. It was left to him to make that drop in height—what is commonly called being “kicked upstairs”—which the crown of England sometimes proposes to those of its servants whom the popular favor has abandoned.

Mr. Asquith came back, having accepted a peerage. This would mean that he would have the honor of bearing the name of his old university; this would mean that he would always have his place in the House of Lords, where, out of all danger from the inconstancy of the public, his opinion would always be listened to with respect. This would also mean that never again would Mr. Asquith be heard in the House of Commons.

I possess a letter from him, the first signed “Oxford,” confessing that he was not yet altogether used to his new name, and he added in French, with

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

an irony which he turned voluntarily against himself:

*"Mais c'est en forgeant, qu'on devient forgeron."*

The discussions which were beginning to be heard about the origin of the War then found an echo in our conversation, in spite of the care I took not to talk politics to him at the table, or even away from the table. To amuse him, I told him how, during a dinner at the Embassy, sitting beside his friend Lord Grey of Fallodon, a lady had asked the Minister eagerly: "Now, tell me, Lord Grey, did you foresee the War?"

A great silence and consternation followed, and, without asking permission to speak, I said: "I think, madam, that Lord Grey had not even foreseen your question."

The incident had diverted him. He asked me what I thought Grey ought to have replied. I parried the question. It was for him to speak, because Lord Grey had been Minister for Foreign Affairs in his Cabinet when the War broke out. He said then, very seriously, "I should have said: 'Yes and no.'"

One day he was lunching with us and a French diplomat who shared the very general opinion that England might have prevented the conflagration if she had declared her intentions three days sooner. I saw the conversation veering toward the forbidden topic. Finding the occasion propitious for

## A GREAT SCHOLAR, A GREAT MAN

putting the question to the one man on this earth who could the best reply, the diplomat drew forth from Lord Oxford only this quotation: "Without the consent of public opinion, the greatest talent could not triumph over circumstances." The passage is from Mirabeau. It can serve as a melancholy epigraph for the last chapter of a noble life.

Public opinion which would not have tolerated a declaration of alliance before the invasion of Belgium, public opinion which thought that with Lloyd George in power the Kaiser would be hanged, will not always let itself be convinced.

In 1925, Mr. Lloyd George was obliged to return to his own party. The Conservatives, whom a triumphant majority had brought back to power, had no further need of his services. The newspapers of England and the Dominions all spoke of the reconciliation of the two Liberal chiefs and published a photograph taken at the Wharf, which represented Lord Oxford and Mr. Lloyd George, and between them little Priscilla Bibesco, the granddaughter of the former. "A little child shall lead them," was written under it.

I saw him for the last time in life one day in May, in his garden, where, from his invalid chair, he surveyed his rows of tulips and the quiet course of the Thames. I brought him a book, which had been published recently in France by André

## SOME ROYALTIES AND A PRIME MINISTER

Maurois, on one of his predecessors, *Disraeli*. He turned over the pages at once; his eyes fell on the picture of "Dizzy" as he appeared in his young days—curled, with frilled shirt, and covered with chains and jewelry. He looked at him for a long time and pronounced only these words: "Incredible creature." He expressed once again the feelings of the thoroughbred Englishman before what was not English.

Westminster, under its vaults, has reëchoed to the funeral chant "Nunc Dimittis." But the Abbey will not receive his ashes; burial at Westminster, the greatest honor that England can render to one of her sons, he refused under the terms of his will.

The Lord Rector of the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, the High Steward of Oxford, the Elder Brother of Trinity House, the Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury from 1908 to 1916, the Doctor of Law of Glasgow, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, St. Andrews and Bristol Universities, the Knight of the Garter, the Earl of Oxford has gone down to his rest in the church of his village, while the words of the Psalm arose:

"I will give to thee understanding."

(1)

THE END.